

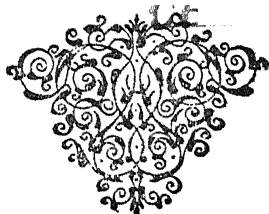
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THE RENAISSANCE

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THE RENAISSANCE

CHAPTER I

HUMANISM

POPULAR notions die hard. A little while ago the Renaissance was regarded as the deliverance of man from intellectual bondage through the influence of the classical revival. Sharply, it was thought, the change came: people hastened to put Duns in Bocardo, painted and sang and told stories like Fiammetta in the *Decameron*, wrote Greek and Latin verse with the freedom of a Porson or a Wilamowitz, and loved with the gallantry of a Berowne. This sparkling world of unreality was somehow to be derived from humanism with its conscious imitation of the Greek and Roman past and its emphasis on the value and significance of the individual. For some reason the men and women of the Renaissance were (and are still by some) regarded as "alive" in contrast to their medieval predecessors: Benvenuto Cellini more than Dante, Cæsar Borgia more than Frederick II. Of a scholastic philosopher Mr. Santayana has written:

"We only find
The garnered husks of his disused words."

This is a fair specimen of the attitude of many of the past generation to the Middle Ages as contrasted with the Renaissance.

There is enough truth in such a point of view to make it worth serious discussion. In no province of

history are the opinions of scholars undergoing so steady a transformation as in that of the fifteenth century. Criticism is concentrating on the analysis of humanism. Was it wholly Italian by origin? How much did it owe to the clerical, the scholastic past? Was it primarily pagan? When Jakob Burckhardt wrote his work on the *Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy*, he focussed attention so strongly upon the Italian side of the movement that the beginnings of humanism in other countries were left untouched—Flanders and the Rhine were as nothing compared with Florence. Nor did it occur to people that some connection might have existed between medieval and Renaissance philosophy and science. But of recent years the tendency has been to break down the barriers between the two periods; to show, for example, how much men like Leonardo da Vinci and Columbus owed to their medieval predecessors in anatomy and cosmography, how deeply the Platonism of the early fifteenth century was rooted in certain phases of medieval theology, how lively was the classical tradition that survived in romanesque and even in gothic art, how doctrines like "Reason of State" are to be found in the realist commercial city-state at earlier times. The modern mind tends to lay stress upon the continuity of culture and does not believe in intellectual cataclysm; yet it is perfectly clear that something on a very large scale happened, or grew in men's minds, to distinguish the sixteenth century from the thirteenth. "Liber scriptus proferetur," wrote the author of the *Dies iræ*; "Lord, what is man!" is the exclamation in *Hamlet*. Between the two quotations lies more than a period of time, more than three hundred and fifty years. We cannot think of Ghiberti and Donatello in the great centuries of religious allegiance; the intellectualism of Florence could not have developed before the prevalence of Papal or imperial interests there had been put out of the question, and

the city had thriven to wealth and power on its own; a universal poet could not have risen in England until the island had both borrowed largely and was at the same time politically separate from the Continent. Politics, religion, economics all play their part in the transformation. The problem, therefore, before a student of the Renaissance is to estimate in right proportion the debt of the movement to antiquity and to the Middle Ages, without failing to show that it has a clearly marked unity of its own. This unity we must first appreciate before we can attack the more complex questions behind. In these pages we shall do so primarily in the fields of politics, economic life, and art. The omission of much of the literary material is deliberate.

The Renaissance, to put it briefly, is the fructifying of the human mind through contact with the classical world of Greece and Rome, the rebirth of the human spirit through adventure and discovery. It is the passage from medieval asceticism to the self-expression and self-cultivation of the humanist ideal. No single expression can do it justice, just as no catalogue of its achievements can ever convey its breadth and subtlety. A new conception of the physical universe, an extension of man's territorial domain through the discovery of the New World, a realisation of what individuals, as individuals, rather than as functionaries of some corporate body, can achieve—these are but aspects of the pervading change. As we suggested, it was no sudden phenomena. St. Francis himself planted some of the seeds that came to flower in the sixteenth century. The movement did not begin with the fall of Constantinople nor perish in the Thirty Years' War. Its first phase had already appeared when Sieneese masters were decorating the Papal palace at Avignon in the fourteenth century; and in many people it lives on to-day, in the taste for unexaggerated beauty, free from the restlessness of the baroque and the distor-

tions of the neo-medieval, or in the correct valuation of the human body, both as mechanism and as the dwelling-place of the soul. How, then, can we convey any idea of a force both past and present, of part of our own intellectual and artistic heritage, as well as of an historical event? Only perhaps (if we are older) by going back into ourselves as we were between the ages of eighteen and twenty-one, and regarding the time between then and now as analogous to the centuries separating the fifteenth and sixteenth from the twentieth. We have learned a great many things in that interim; we have improved—or ought to have improved—in imagination, in sympathy, in intellectual resources, in decent behaviour to one another. We know more and we may care more; but we have never had to repeat the first poignant experiences of beauty and the discovery of what the perfection of technique or the passion for knowledge can mean. This is what came unforgettably to men at a certain period in European history, and we are their descendants.

Now it would be a gross error to hold that the Middle Ages felt none of these things. The Langford Rood, the reliefs at Chichester, the twelfth-century crucifix in the Carolino-Augusteuum at Salzburg, the Chapter-house at Salisbury, the Madonnas of the Schnütgen collection at Cologne, the Angel Choir at Lincoln, the figure-sculpture of Bamberg, Naumburg and Halberstadt—to take a few English and German examples only—are *chefs d'œuvre* that fill one with amazement. The triumphs of Latin romanesque and gothic it would be as ridiculous to belittle as it is to say that before the Renaissance European thought was in chains. No sensible scholars believe in the old *clichés* of darkness and light, the prison house and the fresh air of liberation in connection with Middle Ages and Renaissance. But what we have to recognize is that under certain dissolving forces corporate effort in the service of a universal ideal broke down, that

institutional art (if the expression be permitted) gave place to the art of the individual pioneer in his workshop, that the tram-lines came to an end and men were borne out into unknown country, relying on their own strength and fertility of invention. Walter Raleigh, in his essay on Sir Thomas Hoby, put the point clearly: "The self-assertion of the humanists was open and unashamed; man was to train himself like a race-horse, to cultivate himself like a flower, that he might arrive soul and body to such perfection as mortality might covet."

The greatest of the dissolving forces that took alike out of art and thought the generalized element springing from institutional aims and environment, was humanism. This admits of no simple definition. Strictly speaking, it is the study of classical literature and art, with the object of appreciating the perfection to which allusion was made. It is an exercise in character and taste based upon ancient examples. But it is more; creatively, in art, its tendency is to project the image of our functions into the concrete; in architecture, in music, in poetry the humanist invests his material with his own personality, with human movement and human moods. In the plastic arts, for example, he makes it appeal to our sense of touch. That was the supreme achievement of the Greek sculptors. "The human body," Mr. Geoffrey Scott said, "enters into the current traditions of design." Vasari will praise a building because it seemed "not built, but born"—*non murato ma veramente nato*; and Michael Angelo himself maintained that architecture was incomprehensible to any who had not mastered the human figure. In his essay on the North Italian Painters Mr. Berenson has commented on the different uses that can be made of classical art. "The most profitable of all," he says, "is neither to imitate the past nor to seek merely to be refined and ennobled by it, but to detect the secret of its commerce with nature.

so that we may become equally fruitful." The Florentine artist went back to it perpetually in order to discover new ways for solving his own specific problem, which was how best to portray form and movement. This is the true line: the greatest humanists like Leonardo da Vinci do not archaïse, or slavishly imitate the past; they draw on it and it gives their work a "classical" imprint; but they never cease to be the creative spirits, who fashion their own time anew. Humanism at its height is recourse to the past, not its re-creation.

But first the Antique had to be discovered. The early humanists were not first and foremost artists, but scholars, whose purpose it was to recall medieval Latin to classical purity of style once again. They were philologists and grammarians who were taken up and encouraged by patrons. They worked against poverty, and often under the most discouraging conditions, to discover what lay buried away and disregarded. Poggio Bracciolini (1380-1459) gives us the best idea both of the spirit in which he worked and of the difficulties with which he had to contend. The passage quoted may refer to his exploration of the monastic libraries of the Rhine and of Burgundy while he was north of the Alps for the Council of Constance :

"I verily believe," he says, "that if we had not come to the rescue he (Quintilian) must speedily have perished, for it cannot be imagined that a man magnificent, polished, elegant, urbane, and witty, could much longer have endured the squalor of the prison-house in which I found him, the savagery of his gaolers, the forlorn filth of the place. . . . He seemed to be stretching out his hands, calling upon the Romans and demanding to be saved from so unmerited a doom. . . . In the middle of a well-stocked library we discovered Quintilian, safe as yet and

sound, though covered with dust and filthy with neglect and age. The books, you must know, were not housed according to their worth, but were lying in a most foul and obscure dungeon at the very bottom of a tower, a place into which condemned criminals would hardly have been thrust, and I am firmly persuaded that if anyone would explore these *ergastula* of the barbarians, wherein they incarcerate such men, we should meet with like good fortune in the case of many whose funeral orations have long since been pronounced."

Here is all the rather engaging bumptiousness of the early humanist. "Sturdy children, they pummel their nurse, the medieval," remarks Mgr. Brémond, himself one of their chief admirers, and we cannot but smile at their exaggeration and pose. Yet it was not unnatural.

The movement had begun with the revolt from scholastic Latin and the rediscovery of Cicero's rhythms. The later medieval reaction against the predominance of Aristotle in thought carried with it a similar rebellion against the philosophical language of the great medieval thinkers. Now, there had for long been groups of men who were searching after a richer and more expressive vocabulary: the authors of treatises on the *Ars dictandi*, the writers of the medieval formularies had as their object the adornment of style, so as to make their words more impressive. In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries the main centres of this study of elegance were Bologna and Naples. Its adherents played with the *cursus* and the use of certain rhythmic clauses in their sentences, and in their search after effect were driven to a more profound study of the classics than had been the case heretofore. Gradually it became evident that the hitherto received models could not satisfy. It was

Petrarch (1304-1374) who, both at Avignon and in his visits to Lombardy, showed the way. His admirable *Letters* were modelled on the *Epistolæ ad familiares* of Cicero. Petrarch understood not only the form of the letter and grasped the lucid style, but seized the spirit and understood the Roman sentiment underlying them. His influence in this latter respect lay in the idealistic standpoint from which he regarded the Eternal City. Though much of his work was written in Provence, to him Rome was the centre of the universe. In the same way as his friend Cola di Rienzo, he looked to the Holy Roman Emperor to re-establish Roman civilization. He had the romantic views later held by Mantegna on the subject. Dr. Konrad Burdach has shown that the word *renasci* was used by mid-fourteenth-century writers to connote the rebirth of a kind of world-state, presided over by the Emperor, who was to be both Messiah and Augustus. The original idea of the Renaissance was thus the rebirth of the Roman *imperium*, using as its medium the purified Roman language and modelling its art upon the ancient monuments of Rome. But the caution of Charles IV., the continued presence of alien rule in Naples, the Visconti in Milan, and the petty tyrannies rising in the city-states made the idea of a reunited Italy owning subjection to Rome an impossibility. Most men, less idealistic, preferred to adorn and beautify their own cities or to cultivate themselves.

This early or "Latin" restoration became swallowed up in the far greater change in cultural values that followed—the preference for Greek models, the passion for Greek learning. Greek is not a language of empire, but a perfect medium of self-expression. To use Dr. Wörringer's distinction, it expresses nature rather than character. The second generation of humanists sat at the feet of Byzantine masters. Manuel Chrysoloras was sent to Italy on a political mission and settled in Florence. When he died (at the Council

of Constance) there were Italian scholars who could read Greek manuscripts. At Padua between 1420 and 1430 there were three famous teachers of Greek—Ugo Benzi of Siena, the Greek Gemisthes Plethon, and Pietro Calabro. Before the middle of the fifteenth century Italy had many itinerant scholars engaged upon translation, who would, for a remuneration, latinize Plato or Thucydides. There came three events which determined the triumph of the Greek studies. The Greek Emperor came to the Council of Florence, transferred in 1438 from Ferrara, bringing with him Greek scholars, one of whom, Bessarion, remained in Italy, became a Cardinal, and did much for the study of Plato. His collection of manuscripts was put at the service of scholars, and is now in St. Mark's Library at Venice. Secondly, the fall of Constantinople drove several fugitives to seek refuge in Italy—though the importance of the Turkish success has been generally over-emphasized in this connection; and, thirdly, the election of Thomas Parentucelli of Sarzana as Nicholas V. meant that the new learning took possession of the Holy See. The alliance between Hellenism and the Papacy was secure when Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini was raised to the throne; and Æneas, we know, thought that the decline of the Empire was due to the fact that scholarship had gone over to the Papacy. The resolution of Nicholas V. to stand behind the new movement was a bold one. Lorenzo Valla (1405-1457), the man who had exposed the Donation of Constantine and had narrowly escaped the Inquisition, the scholar who reduced the style of classical writers to a science with fixed principles, became an official of the Vatican and received from the Pope 500 ducats for translating Thucydides. The Papacy was determined to harness a force that might well be, and was in places, the greatest danger to ecclesiastical tradition; it saw, as Lord Acton pointed out, that there was a Christian as well as a pagan antiquity, that the

early Church had depended on Greek writings, and that their recovery and study was as essential a part of the new learning as the pursuit of Homer or of Plato.

As humanism extended, the patron, the bookseller, and the printer played vital parts. The patron and the town were the chief employers of scholars. Apart from the tyrants and rulers of city-states, of whom we shall presently speak, great dilettanti like Niccolò Niccoli and Gianozzo Manetti also made themselves indispensable to the humanists. Naldi, who wrote Manetti's life, speaks of him as combining public service (he was the Florentine magistrate and tax collector at Pistoia) with humanistic studies and spending his leisure hours writing the history of Pistoia. Niccolò Niccoli was the employer of the future Nicholas V. A more sensitive spirit, he wrote nothing, because he was convinced that he could not treat of anything in the perfect form which he desired. This don-like reticence was by no means invariable on the part of patrons, whom their scholars had to humour and encourage at the expense of sincerity. But Niccolò is described by the Florentine bookseller Vespasiano as a man entirely pervaded with the classical spirit, persuading the young to learn the Latin authors, without whom a young man, as soon as the flower of his youth was over, would be of no consequence (*virtù*). The co-operation of such people with the intelligent booksellers was of the greatest value to learning.

In his memoirs Vespasiano de Bisticci has left us the undying record of his customers. And what customers! His biggest was the great Cosmio de Medici, *pater patriæ*, who after his return to Florence in 1433 began to build up in the new lodgings at San Lorenzo a library equal to that of Nicholas V. "One day, when I was with him, he said: 'What plan can you suggest for the formation of this library?' I replied that if the books were to be bought, it would be im-

possible, for the reason that they could not be found." He asked Vespasiano what to do, and the dealer advised him to get the books transcribed. In the days before printing that was the bookseller's task. "He was anxious I should use all possible despatch and, after the library was begun, as there was no lack of money, I engaged forty-five scribes and completed two hundred volumes in twenty-two months." We can see Vespasiano providing William de Grey, the Bishop of Ely, with similar assistance, before the Bishop went on to Padua to sit at the feet of Guarino. Grey, we are told, paid a young scholar to live with him and help him with his library (from which Balliol has largely benefited). In this he was emulating the humanist cardinals.

What the bookseller did in the early stages the printer-publisher performed later. It must have been hard for the wealthy patron to dispense with the beautiful humanistic script that had taken the place of gothic writing. When Cardinal Bessarion's envoys saw for the first time a printed book in the house of Constantine Lascaris they ridiculed the invention "made among the barbarians in some German city." But the Germans, who were the first printers at Rome, must have pleased the weary copyists, and Lorenzo Valla himself praised the discovery. It meant that the printer-publisher now took over a number of the functions formerly performed by the bookseller; but it also meant a good deal of piracy, before any laws of copyright were in vogue, and the necessity of having a complete understanding with an honest printer. Not everyone was as fortunate as Erasmus with John Froben, in whose house at Basel he lived after 1521. Froben gave great assistance to the scholar Œcolampadius, in the same way as Aldo Manuzio at Venice helped the Greeks, Marcus Musurus and John Lascaris and the future Papal nuncio, Jerome Aleander. Erasmus, in one of his *Adagia*, praises the kindness of the

little society started by Aldo, the "Neacademia," in lending him manuscripts and in helping him with his Greek; for to be a publisher in the sixteenth century was to be a member of a learned profession engaged in diffusing science and culture. The publisher himself was a scholar, with a scholar's sympathies; when Erasmus came to Venice to publish with Aldo, he stayed in Aldo's house eight months. His warmest praise, however, he reserves for Froben. "Who would not love such a nature?" he wrote (1527). "He was to his friends the one best friend, so simple and sincere that even if he had wished to conceal anything he could not have done it, so repugnant was it to his nature." *O si sic omnes.*

CHAPTER II

PRINCE AND COURTIER

MANY persons think that when they come to the Renaissance they can roll up the map of Europe (if they ever had one) and luxuriate in poetry and art to the exclusion of the "duller" details of political history. But these cannot be ignored, nor is political history dull if it is read properly. In all branches of life during the Renaissance we are dealing with a time of heightened vitality. As on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, Adam has received the touch of God; but that touch connotes energy, not necessarily goodness. We are reading of a time when states were as full-blooded men, and were as concerned with armour, fortifications, drainage and town-planning, with the practice of diplomacy and political strategy, as with the more decorative aspects of existence. When Leonardo went on his first visit to Milan (1483-1499), not only did he contract to make the equestrian statue of Lodovico Sforza and to paint the *cenacolo* in Santa Maria delle Grazie, but, in view of the alliance of the city with Naples in the war of Ferrara, undertaken so as to help in defending the duchy against the attacks of Venice and the Papal forces, he felt it his duty to suggest to Sforza a series of designs and inventions for attack and defence; these, as Mr. McCurdy has analyzed them, relate to the construction of light bridges, pontoons, scaling ladders, trench devices, tunnelling apparatus, armoured cars, mortars, and other ordnance. "If," Leonardo continues, "the fight should take place upon the sea, I can construct many engines most suitable for attack or defence, and ships

which can resist the fire of the heaviest cannon, and powders or vapours." It cannot be sufficiently emphasized that the painter of the "Adoration of the Kings" (Uffizi) designed both a tank and an aeroplane, and in more peaceful days assisted in irrigation works on the Plain of Lomellina (1494). Now, Leonardo's versatility was admittedly marvellous, but something similar was expected from the artist-craftsman at the Court of the prince; he was to employ his talent in the service of the State taking its daily exercise—within, the maintenance of order, and, without, the practice of the art of war.

For at the Renaissance the State becomes every inch a man, and absorbs activities which formerly lay in the hands of other communities either within it or parallel with it. The process went hand in hand with the decline of the spiritual power as a moral force in Europe; and when, with the failure of the Conciliar Movement, constitutionalism throughout Christendom received a definite setback, the absolutist ideas latent in the doctrines of the Roman lawyers began to prevail. Law, instead of being a universal norm or long-ingrained custom, came to be regarded as the feat of deliberate human will, the will of a determinate body or person. The great cities worked out a purely utilitarian morality in the commercial life which was their *raison d'être*. Territorial state and city-state both became self-sufficient, all-absorbing units in the Aristotelian sense, bodies politic, controlling in increasing measure even the spiritual life and the public religious observances of their members; and at the head of these, representing them and personifying them, stood, either publicly or secretly by underground influence, a single individual in whom the personality of the corporate body was concentrated. He had arrived there partly through his own strong arm, partly through various combinations of historical forces. In England the magnates had fought themselves to a

standstill in a great family feud, and nothing but an outsider who yet united both lines could restore peace and order; in France it was the man who could undermine or hold the balance between the selfish feudatories, and who had been able to resist and finally explode the dreams of empire in the medieval mind of the neighbouring Burgundian state; in Spain it was the unifier of Castile and Aragon, the bringer to perfection of the art of foxy diplomacy; in the Empire, until the time of Charles V., it was the individual elector who, from the time of the Golden Bull and before it, in his own territories kept the Emperor the shadow of a great name and jurisdictionally was almost supreme; in Italy it was the successful *condottiere*, the hired captain called into the city which he had defended or beleaguered, to reduce faction strife, enlarge the *contado*, or to cope with the aggression of other neighbours; or it might be the representative of a powerful merchant family, working with stealth and plausibility to control the electing organs of the commune. But this universal prevalence of autocracy at the end of the fifteenth century cannot be explained simply by various combinations of circumstances; there must be some other reason why the respectable constitutionalism of, say, 1400 should have so signally failed before the century was out. In 1400 the English king was asked "to live of his own"; contrast this with Henry VIII.'s own portrait of the body politic whose sovereign head he constituted :

"Where by divers sundry old authentic histories and chronicles it is manifestly declared and expressed that this realm is an Empire, and so hath been accepted in the world, governed by one supreme Head and King, having the dignity and royal estate of the Imperial Crown of the same, unto whom a Body Politick, compact of all sorts and degrees of people and by names of

Spirituality and Temporality be bounden, and ought to bear, next to God, a natural and humble obedience."

The relation of master and subject needs further explanation also than the recrudescence of those "antique-modern" theories of which Gierke spoke in his treatise on medieval political thought; than the revival of Aristotle and the predominance of Roman legal maxims. Two suggestions would seem to occur. In the first place, expanding commercial prosperity and the decay of the upper feudal classes as the highest constituent element in medieval lay society are bringing forward a middle element, industrials like clothiers and wool merchants or banks and representatives of "city" interests, who naturally look to the monarch to stand behind them in their enterprises and are prepared to support him in his struggle for order and governance, since it is to their plain advantage to do so. The class movement of the fifteenth century is essentially monarchist or (as we might venture to say) Fascist, as compared with the archaic and feudal tendencies of the past, just because of its worship of order and government and the demand it makes for State support in the case of its own industry and commercial enterprise. Renaissance paternalism is really the product of an upper *bourgeoisie*, which had everything to gain by supporting the power that alone could guarantee force to peaceful legislation and was prepared to negotiate for its representative organizations abroad. Secondly, and along with this general economic reason—and we do not claim that it applies everywhere—grew the study and approval of political technique considered as a thing in itself, of pure ability and style in statecraft. Kingship or rule is not a trust or a contract (a notion implied in much medieval theory of kingship), but an art, the product both of personality and experience. How strongly this

was felt can be seen in Commynes' picture of Louis XI., with its special note of the pains he would take "to gain a single person," and of his ability to extract himself from a difficult position, or of his consummate tactical skill, often endangered by his restlessness. The whole cry was for effective methods in government, for success rather than for idealism; but contemporary taste, influenced by humanism, demanded that those methods should be artistic, that the purposeful corruption of one's opponents should be done with all the allurements of magnificence, that deceit be properly pavilioned. Yet it must not be thought for a moment that corruption was advocated; it is merely that fundamental questions of morality did not interest Renaissance theorists; they were absorbed in secondary problems of immediate practical bearing, the problems of what things were possible and what expedient in the interest of the State. This latter is the sole criterion of action. Now, the ruler, it should be remembered, personifies the State, and naturally, when personal and political are so closely blended, the results of following reason of State will not be above our suspicion. Yet in general the principle that the security of the order-giving power, the dynasty, means peace and governance in the community was an intelligible and a reasonable proposition in the Italy of the sixteenth century, and not a bad one in the England of the late fifteenth. Monarchism thus satisfied the capitalist tendencies at work in society and the æsthetic appreciation of statecraft.

But the art of politics by no means always prescribes the legal or theoretic absolutism of a single man. If Renaissance theory demanded a monarch, it was on no abstract grounds, but because, as we saw above, the single ruler could mobilise forces which no one else could. It was because he could focus and apply the maximum of public spirit in the public interest. To

Machiavelli, who was no monarchist, the strength of a state seems to depend on the amount of public spirit generated by it. As he implies in his best political treatise, the *Discourses on the First Decade of Livy*, it was by developing this force that the Roman Republic was so successful. In his political life Machiavelli had ample opportunities for witnessing the fierce egotism and the purely selfish wills of men. In the service of the Florentine Republic since 1494, he had become in 1498 secretary to the Council of the Ten, who directed the foreign relations and the wars of Florence, a position held by him until his exile in 1512. In these years, as friend of Piero Soderini and employed on frequent missions and embassies, he had collected much material for political generalization, and when the restoration of the Medici drove him to literature it was to the experiences of Florence and of Rome that he turned for mutual contrast and political lesson. He combines Aristotle's doctrine of the self-sufficiency of the city-state with a Hobbesian distrust of the individual. Unless they are compelled to goodness, men will always show themselves wicked; their wills tend to be anti-social and anarchical; yet they have a capacity for public spirit, if only it can be developed, and this is practicable through religion (valuable for its doctrine of rewards and punishments), through an administration carried on without fear or favour, through an adequate system of defence, and good and equal laws. It is the business of government, by providing these things, to maintain in the State that character of *virtù*, bold and intelligent energy, which at times in Machiavelli's argument is equivalent to "public spirit" and on other occasions constitutes the main pre-requisite of that enlightened patriotism. A republic may effect this quite as well as a prince, although, when corruption has become rife, the rule of a prince may be necessary. Like the Fascist polity, Machiavelli's state works in an atmosphere of

high tension. It has to be efficient in arms, for how inadequate the Italians were in this respect the last twenty years had shown. Charles VIII.'s entry into Naples had begun a struggle between France and Spain for predominance in Italy, and in 1513, that very year he wrote, the Spaniards were in Naples, the Swiss in Lombardy, and the French were contemplating a new invasion. Those inclined to judge Machiavelli harshly must remember these things. They must reflect that the higher political morality is scarcely possible when men have not learned the elementary lessons of mutual co-operation and self-defence, and for these he was pleading with all the conviction of experience. Where, however, the difficulty lies is in his express statement that a healthy state will always seek expansion. In the *Prince*, written to urge the Medici to undertake the defence of Italy against the foreign invader, he suggests that ceaseless effort to extend dominion is needful, partly owing to the perpetually unsatisfied soul of man, partly to the fact that states have always either to increase or to diminish. As he says in his *Florentine History*: "Nature never suffers anything in this world to come to a stand." To take the offensive in order to attain security is his advice, and there lies the radical weakness of his political doctrine.

In spite of Machiavelli's appeal to a common defender of Italy, with which the *Prince* ends, we are left with a picture of a number of states "in the posture of gladiators"—Italian ready to encroach upon Italian for the realization of *virtù*; public spirit within, hostility without. One cannot escape from the circle. We may have reached a notion of sovereignty within the state, something perhaps like the *puissance souveraine* which Jean Bodin (1529-1596) conceived to be the mark of the fully formed state; but does the state exist to realize the concept of sovereignty? Does it exist to generate public spirit alone? Has it no care

for moral and intellectual virtues? Bodin could go further than Machiavelli and claim that virtue includes knowledge, which is the final, the justifying end. And there were indeed some small communities in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries that did try to realize Bodin's later maxim that "le premier et principal but de toute république doit être la vertu"; though we must give *vertu* primarily an intellectual sense, without expecting the austere morality of Geneva.

The greater dynasties of Italy will not give us so good an illustration as the smaller. The Aragonese Alfonso who ruled in Naples (1435-1458) stands out as an exception; but Francesco Sforza, the brilliant *condottière* who replaced the Visconti after the brief interlude of the "Golden Ambrosian Republic" and the amazing tyrant, the Moor, fall within the category of Machiavellian *virtù* rather than that of Bodin. True, as Burckhardt pointed out, the fact that Leonardo stayed at the Milanese Court so long, when the world lay open to him, shows that Sforza had loftier elements in his character, which his efforts for the improvement of the University of Pavia attest. Yet at the end of his life, when he gave his audiences, he was separated from his visitors by a bar—such drawbacks had *virtù*. The houses of Gonzaga at Mantua and of Montefeltro at Urbino had, on the other hand, a peacefulness and security that sprang from greater internal harmony and a higher sense of duty to all elements within their little communities. The charming Isabelle d'Este, the wife of Francesco Gonzaga of Mantua, had both character and intelligence; she knew a good work of art when she saw one, and the poets and scholars with whom she corresponded were content with nothing more than her approval. At Urbino, loveliest of hill towns, *cortesía*, which is the more attractive part of *virtù*, found its full realization under the rule of Federigo of Montefeltro (1442-1482). The

mention of him and of his wife, Battista of the Sforza, calls up the scarlet and silvery green of Piero's perfect panel in the Uffizi; the austere, yet highly decorative, figures of the prince and his wife against the flecked northern Umbrian landscape (Piero della Francesca was painting the neighbourhood of Borgo), and on the reverse the classical triumphal chariots above the sapphics commemorating their moderation in success. It was of the Court of Urbino that Castiglione wrote that praise of the *καλὸς κἀγαθός*, which stands as the ideal delineation of Renaissance manhood.

The praises of virtue, grace, and wisdom are in his *Courtier*, of magnanimity and that negligence—*sprezzatura*—which is the essence of good manners; of the easy and unembarrassed bearing that proclaims the man of noble spirit, showing that he is not concerned with unessentials. The work is in the form of a conversation. On the fourth evening the discussion touches on the end of the courtier. The paragon so far depicted is a little too cold and complete, with an experience that can only come of years. But the courtier, it has been generally agreed, must be a lover, and if so, he cannot be old; for if he is, how shall he escape ridicule? This gives Bembo his chance to maintain that there is a love fitting to men of all ages, and to give, through Castiglione's words, immortal form to the Platonism of the Renaissance. In so doing he was following in the footsteps of the Platonic enthusiasts who met every seventh of November at Lorenzo de Medici's villa to discuss and expound the principles of the *Symposium*. Both Ficino and Pico della Mirandola have left us records of these celebrations in the perfect setting of Careggi; but Bembo may have outstripped them in his praise of the love that does not age, that passion which is in reality the search of the soul after beauty, first recognized by it in the human form of the beloved and later sought and recognized *sub specie eternitatis*, as idea. To that

sight it was the business of the courtier to aspire, and in contemplation of it to reach the highest good:

“ And this high beauty of spirit—in the conscience
of it,
in the love of it, and the appearance of it—
tho’ it hav no quarrel with thatt physical beauty
whereof ’twas born, when once ’tis waken’d in
the mind
needeth no more support of the old animal lure,
but absolute in its transmitted power and grace
maketh a new beauty of its own appearances.”*

This “ new beauty ” is what Morello in the *Courtier* cannot understand: the ray of the Divine Beauty penetrating all things, the idea rather than the substance; a conception to which man is introduced in youth by means of the senses through the observation and fruition of particular objects, until in his maturity he is able to arrive at the greater generalisation, and as the evening draws on to find it constantly sustaining.

The connection of the despots with the arts finds its best early example in the circle of Leonello d’Este at Ferrara. He was a good example of the *cortigiano*. His father Niccolò had given him the right military instruction under Braccio da Montone; and it was fortunate that in 1429 he hit upon Guarino of Verona, who had studied in Greece under John Chrysoloras. Guarino taught his pupil for seven years, and during that time Ferrara became one of the choicest Italian centres of learning. Vittore Pisanello came to paint and model Niccolò’s children (Leonello’s profile can be seen in a Bargello bronze), and in the pages of the Milanese savant, Angelo Camillo Decembrio, we can follow the scholarly group which gathered round the young prince, walking out in the cool of the evening

* Robert Bridges, *The Testament of Beauty*, Canto III., 281-287.

to Belfiore or riding under a night of stars to Belriguardo. To the circle was soon added the versatile architect Leon Battista Alberti. The great man came as a literary figure rather than as a practical designer; and it was at Leonello's instigation that he wrote the three books of his, *De Re Ædificatoria*. In 1444 he was asked to decide between two rival models for the statue of Leonello's father, and the task led him, in a Leonardesque way, to write his treatise, *De equo animante*, on the horse. "Wherefore," he says, "as I again and again looked upon these works, made with admirable craftsmanship, it came into my mind to consider more diligently not merely the beauty and the outward appearance of horses, but also their entire nature and habits." This is typical of the Renaissance. The object depicted must be studied in its physiology, in its illustrations of the laws of motion and energy. "A bird," said Leonardo, "is an instrument working according to mathematical law." It is not without significance that some of the finest figures of Renaissance sculpture—Verrocchio's "Colleone" at Venice, Donatello's "Gattamelata" at Padua—combine the animal with the human; in their superb vitality, their sense of power and movement, they portray that conjunction of speed and foresight, of animal energy and intellectual power that is the mark of the great Renaissance captains. Never since the Elgin marbles or the Æginetan pediment had there been in art such union of τὸ θυμοειδές and τὸ λογιστικόν.

CHAPTER III

THE MAP OF THE WORLD

IN a later chapter we shall lay stress upon the scientific achievement of the Florentines in the region of art. We shall show that no art is capable of development that is not based upon a science of perspective and a study of the physiology of the human body. But the discovery of man's properties and potentialities is not reflected merely in the great painting and sculpture of Italy, but in the extension of our knowledge of the physical globe and of the properties of matter.

It is often forgotten that the exploration of the fifteenth century was based on original work in geographical theory just as much as on practical discovery. The life of the most interesting figure in geographical research, Prince Henry of Portugal (1394-1460), has been called a student's life more than a statesman's. Had we been able to visit him in his experimental port—for that is what it was—at Sagres, just by Cape St. Vincent, we should probably have found him in a room looking out over the Atlantic south-westward to the route of his vessels that were exploring the African coasts and intent upon early coastal charts, the practical guides of the trading mariner. Discovery was in the family. His brothers, Edward and Pedro, were distinguished for their services in mathematics and astronomy. In his travels Pedro collected valuable materials for cartography, an early copy of Marco Polo and a map given him while at Venice (1425-1428). It is not quite certain what this map was, but it may have been one by the brothers Pizzigani. At any rate, the science of map-making began with the Italians.

The Venetian map of Marino Sanuto, drawn in 1306, "put into map form," Professor Beazeley tells us, "the ideas that inspired the first Italian voyages into the Atlantic." The coast of Africa was not, however, drawn until the appearance of the Florentine map of 1351, called the Laurentian *Portolano*, in which the Azores, Canaries, and Madeira appear for the first time. The early *portolani* were simply practical guides for mariners and merchants, much as the *Ægean Pilot* to-day. They were coastline charts, not exercises in elegant speculation, half bestiary, half fancy.

Early exploration, with the signal exceptions of Marco Polo and the Arab Ibn Batuta, had been primarily the work of missionaries. There had been penetrations into Central Africa, Thibet, and Cathay, either by land or by coasting past the Malay Archipelago. Africa had still to be fully defined. Little could be done on any considerable scale till the polarity of the magnetic needle on the mariner's compass could be generally utilized; but as soon as this came into vogue, in the fifteenth century, prospects were better. Prince Henry's main field of study was the north-western projection of the African coast. After his time Sierra Leone was discovered in 1462, and in 1484 Diogo Cão found the mouth of the Congo. But Henry also aimed at reaching India from the Atlantic; in this he was unsuccessful, but again after his death Bartholomew Diaz was sent out (1486) to round the southern point of Africa, which he successfully accomplished; and Pedro de Covilhão managed to get as far as Abyssinia. The Cape route to India was finally discovered by Vasco da Gama (1498). It was Vasco's voyages that revolutionized Eastern commerce. Until 1524 the Venetians held the carrying trade of India, brought viâ the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea to Syria and Egypt. The attainment of India was equally the end of Christopher Columbus, who, following the suggestion of Toscanelli and underestimating the diameter

of the globe, sailed due west to discover (1492-1498) the West Indies and North America, which barred his way to the Far East. The discoveries of Columbus led to Spanish adventurers flocking into the Atlantic. His companions carried on his work. The voyages of Alonso de Ojeda and Amerigo Vespucci to the Brazilian coast produced the first literature of Spanish exploration, the account (1504) by Vespucci; while Ojeda's partner, Martin Fernandez Enciso, published the *Suma de Geografia*, giving the account of Darien. The conquest of Peru by Francesco Pizarro, of Mexico by Hernan Cortes, of Guatemala by Alvarado, and of Florida by Hernando de Soto need not detain us here: incomparably the most important of the Spanish voyages was that of Magellan, whose plan for reaching the Spice Islands by sailing westward led him to work his way through between Patagonia and Tierra del Fuego to enter the Pacific and attain the Philippine Islands.

While the Portuguese were concentrating on Africa and the East Indies, and the Spaniards were circumnavigating the world and completing their knowledge of the waste of Central and Southern America, Englishmen were exploring the possibilities of the north-eastern and north-western passages to Cathay. The search for the former, under Sir Hugh Willoughby and Hugh Chancellor, led to the beginnings of regular trade with Russia; the quest for the latter to the discovery by John Cabot of Newfoundland and part of the coast of America, and to the Polar expeditions by Frobisher, Davis, Hudson, and Baffin. Many English vessels followed in the track of Magellan to circumnavigate the globe. The voyages of Drake, Cavendish, and Hawkins, described by Froude and Sir Walter Raleigh, need but be mentioned here to point first to the challenge offered to the power of Spain and its result, the further stimulation of Spanish conquest and settlement, and secondly to the impulse given to

geographical study in this country. Unlike Prince Henry's men, we began as pirates and adventurers and settled down to collate our results some hundred years afterwards—for the mariners of Fowey and the south-western coast had begun their raiding explorations in the fifteenth century. The scientist arising was a Student of Christ Church, Richard Hakluyt (1553-1616), whose *Principal Navigations* (the first version of which appeared in 1589) Froude has called "the prose epic of the modern English nation." Hakluyt was absorbed from an early age in the history of discovery. After taking his degree he gave lectures on the subject, in the course of which he claims to have first shown "the new, lately reformed maps, globes, spheres, and other instruments of the art for demonstration in the common schools." He believed, in fact, that geography was a "popular subject," or, if it is preferred, a subject for extension lecturing. The effect of this belief it would be hard to overestimate.

Geographical exploration and discovery preceded scientific, in the rigid sense of that term, although in this essay we would not confine its use purely to natural science as commonly understood. The humanists did not look with immediate favour on what they regarded as science, which they connected with astrolabes, herbals, and Arabs—too medieval a mixture for them. Our chief modern historian of science, Dr. Charles Singer, has told us that if he had to name a year for the termination of medieval science he would select 1543, the date of the appearance of two fundamental modern works based on experimental science—the *De Fabrica Corporis Humani* of the Belgian Andreas Vesalius (1514-1564) and the *De revolutionibus orbium cælestium* of Copernicus the Pole (1473-1543). Undoubtedly the first man of science in the modern sense was Roger Bacon, the Oxford Franciscan (1214-1294). His book on optics became a textbook, valuable for its treatment of lenses and concave

mirrors; he constructed astronomical tables; he was a geographer; an expert on the calendar; he described the composition and manufacture of gunpowder; and he insisted upon the value of mathematics as a foundation for education. But his mathematical and philosophical works, studied as they were, did not have the profound effect they deserved. He was too much an experimentalist for his time, and from such ways came the only hope of scientific method. It was after William of Occam had given philosophy a decisive turn in this direction that science began to take a more modern aspect. Pierre d'Ailly, the friend of Gerson at Paris, a famous nominalist teacher and later cardinal, in his *Imago Mundi* (1410) speaks of the spherical form of the earth and of the means of reaching the Far East by the western sea route. In the Columban Library at Seville there exists to-day a copy of d'Ailly's *Imago* which belonged to Columbus, annotated with the explorer's own notes. At Padua in the early fifteenth century there were two first-rate scientists, Prosdocimo de' Beldomandi the mathematician, and Toscanelli himself. These men it was that taught the remarkable Nicholas of Cues, one of the subtlest and rarest minds of his time, who, as scholars come to appreciate his work, will be valued increasingly in the study of Renaissance science. Nicholas, whose main mathematical works are the *De Transmutationibus geometricis* (1450), the *Quadratura Circuli* (1450), the *De Mathematicis Complementis* (1453), and the *De Mathematica Perfectione* (1458), constructed an hygrometer (of which he gives an account in his *De Staticis Experimentis*), conducted experiments in weighing, and wrote upon dynamics. Probably, however, the science that was most influential till Copernicus came with his heliocentric system was that of the anatomists at Bologna. Here William de Saliceto (1215-1280) and Thaddeus of Florence (1223-1303) were teachers of great importance.

Their work was carried on by Mondino da Zuzzi (1276-1328), who compiled the anatomical textbook of the later Middle Ages. These are more truly the precursors and teachers of the Florentine artists whose aim was to see the world in the light of nature. We shall see how much attention Leonardo da Vinci paid to dissection.

Copernicus tells us that he was led to seek a new theory of the heavenly bodies because he found the mathematicians at variance on the subject. "Occasioned by this," he says, "I decided to try whether, on the assumption of some motion of the earth, better explanations of the revolutions of the heavenly spheres might not be found. Thus assuming the motions which I attribute to the earth . . . I have found that when motions of the other planets are referred to the circulation of the earth and are computed for the revolution of each star, not only do the phenomena necessarily follow therefrom, but that also the order and magnitude of the stars and of all their orbits and the heaven itself are so connected that in no part can anything be transposed without confusion to the rest and to the whole universe." This theory retains the idea of the circular motion of the heavenly bodies. The planets, of which the earth is one, circle round the sun. The fixed stars are at a definite distance in an immobile sphere.

The work of the artist-anatomists was carried on by Vesalius (1514-1564). In the University of Padua the visitor to-day can see the oldest dissecting theatre in Europe. In the first edition of his *De fabrica corporis humani*, the frontispiece shows Vesalius at work among his pupils there. But the picture does not give any idea of the fact that in some ways Vesalius was as much physiologist as anatomist. He thinks of the living body the whole time, and tries to restore the anatomy of the part studied into its form while living.

Vesalius was not treading on dangerous ground;

but Copernicus did not dare to publish his discoveries until, under Paul III., there was a lull in the religious storm that had raged since Luther broke with the Catholic Church. Tycho Brahe (1546-1601), who was a Dane researching at Prag, rejected Copernicus' view that the earth moves round the sun, but made observations of the celestial movements which were of the greatest value to successors, particularly to the German Kepler (1571-1630), who assisted him in the compilation of the Rudolphine Tables. His great work was the *New Astronomy*, in the form of commentaries on the motions of Mars, published in 1609 at Prag. Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) was the founder of the science of dynamics. Professor of mathematics at Pisa, and in 1592 at Padua, Galileo made the important discovery that the spaces through which a body falls, in equal times, increase as the numbers 1, 3, 5, 7. He put his theories to the test of experience by dropping unequal weights from a gallery in the leaning tower of Pisa. His most remarkable astronomical discovery was that of Jupiter's satellites (1610). He also detected the spots on the sun and inferred its rotation and the inclination of its axis to the plane of the ecliptic. As his discoveries and lectures became more famous, the antagonism of the Church grew; and when in 1632, without Papal permission, he published a dialogue expounding the Copernican system against the Ptolemaic, a congregation of cardinals, monks, and mathematicians examined his work, condemned it as dangerous, and summoned him to appear before the Inquisition. Before the Tribunal, Galileo had to renounce what he had maintained.

It was the same with the philosopher Giordano Bruno (1549-1600), the Dominican, who ventured to expound a logical system based on the *Ars magna* of Ramon Lull. The Inquisition of Venice seized him and transferred him to Rome, where he was imprisoned for seven years, and finally burned for refusal

to retract his doctrines. The opposition of the counter-reformation to scientific theory is perfectly intelligible under the stress of the new individualist doctrines of the German reformers; but the printing press made the burning of scientific heretics singularly ineffective, unless the type could also be broken up. It would be going too far to maintain that Gutenberg's invention rendered the Inquisition obsolete, since the generation that followed these pioneers saw to it that their light was not extinguished. The era of experimental science, longed for by Roger Bacon, had dawned; and Francis of that name (1561-1626), the greatest of English scientific intellects in that age, could embody in immortal writing the spirit of the new discoveries. His highly imaginative work, *The New Atlantis*, projected a palace of invention, a great temple of knowledge, where, in Mr. R. A. Gregory's words, "the pursuit of knowledge in all its branches was to be organized on principles of the highest efficiency." From this dream rose the Royal Society (1662), which had as its aim the publication of discovery. Science had to move from the secret working of the alchemist to round-table discussion among co-operating fellow-workers.

CHAPTER IV

THE CITY

THE true setting for the Prince is the palace of a southern city-state; but there were many places with a trading, rather than a political or a clerical, past, where the communal tradition still ran on and dictatorship was only tolerated if it was decently concealed. In the majority of these capital had established a firm control by the beginning of the fifteenth century; it had differentiated the various processes in industry and had emphasized the distinction between the directing oligarchy and the mass of the workers. The need for ready money in commercial and industrial enterprise is age-long, but in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, with the voyages of discovery and the increasing sums spent by municipalities on public works, with the advance in the standards of comfort and magnificence alike, that need was more keenly felt than before; companies and individuals pushed themselves forward to become the lenders and bankers both of their own areas and of Europe as a whole. The connection of family prosperity with urban greatness can be very clearly traced in a number of Northern communities. The beautiful Renaissance houses of Caen point to it; but, to go further south-east, we shall find a very instructive example at Augsburg. Here it was the Guild of Weavers and Merchants, a union of industrial and commercial capital, trading in spices, silk, and woollen materials with Venice, that brought the town to the height of its position in Europe.

Prominent in these guilds were the sons of Jakob

Fugger, especially Jakob II., who became a merchant in 1473, when he was just fourteen. Like many young Germans of the day, he learned his business in the Fondaco dei Tedeschi at Venice. His first big transaction was a large loan to Sigismund, Archduke of the Tyrol, in return for a mortgage on the best of the Tyrolese silver mines. The trade in copper helped to extend his influence, and probably began (1494) the connection with Antwerp. The biggest game for the Fugger was exploiting the Hapsburgs. The Emperor Maximilian was normally in need of ready money, and Jakob Fugger was often required to get it at short notice to Augsburg. On the security of the Tyrolese silver and copper mines the banker would make the advances; but when in July, 1507, Maximilian's credit was *nil* and he was preparing a Roman expedition, the Emperor had to mortgage his revenues as Count of Kirchberg and Lord of Weissenstein, and the territories pledged, never having been redeemed, passed into the possession of the Fugger. In 1511, the Emperor conceived the absurd notion of making himself Pope, and a plan was drawn up for Jakob Fugger to lend 300,000 ducats (in security for which the Crown jewels were to be mortgaged), with an interest of 100,000 ducats, for which Fugger was to be given a lien on the next imperial subsidy, future taxes on the Austrian Crown lands, the annual Spanish subsidies, and, if this was not enough, on a third of all revenues drawn by Maximilian from the Holy See. The expedition never properly materialised, but the whole transaction is a very instructive example of the Renaissance qualities of reckless adventure and hard-headed bleeding. By 1525 the Fuggers were the most influential financiers of their time, with business relations from Hungary to Spain, Antwerp to Naples. "He is the glory of all Germany," wrote Clemens Sender, the contemporary Augsburg chronicler, of Jakob II. It is impossible to visit Augsburg without

realizing the fact. The decorated Fuggerhaus in the wine market is perhaps not so great a monument to him as the tomb in St. Anne's Church or the Fuggerei Almshouses, that admirable and reasonably built colony of low dwellings that serves as the German St. Cross (only much bigger), attractive in its neatness and comfort. The art of Augsburg is best seen in the elder Holbein and Hans Burgkmair. It is Holbein's early manner that is represented in the Augsburg Gallery, but his full powers can be seen in the altar of St. Sebastian (1516), in the Alte Pinakothek, Munich, which shows what he was capable of doing after studying the best Italian examples. Yet the most lasting impression of Renaissance Augsburg comes from the fountains designed by Elias Holl and Adrian de Vries, or from the comparatively late Rathaus (1615-1620), with its strong Venetian influence.

Art does not flourish under poor conditions. If the Fuggerei made Augsburg great and glorious, it was good local administration, trading facilities which drew rich merchants, and fairs with their cosmopolitan clientele that made Bruges in the fifteenth century blossom as a centre of early Renaissance art unparalleled in Northern Europe. It was not the strongly classical art that we shall soon be examining south of the Alps; it was rather due to the natural development of the medieval spirit when touched with piety, interest in natural expression, love of the countryside and the simple things of home—qualities stimulated by the religious movement in the Low Countries, of which we shall speak later. The great period of Bruges was brief; the place had one harbour, ten miles off at Sluys, where goods were unloaded and carried along the estuary of the Zwyn to Damme, and thence to Bruges. Upon the navigability of this estuary the fortunes of the place depended, and when the outlet silted up, the end of Bruges was not long delayed. But the *Blütezeit* was a bright one. In the

reign of Philip the Good of Burgundy (1419-1467), under Charles the Bold (1467-1477), and his daughter, the Duchess Marie (d. 1482), wife of the Emperor Maximilian, the brothers Van Eyck, Roger van der Weyden, Robert Campin, and Memlinc were able to give their employers a distinction which few artists outside the Florentines of the *Quattrocento* have been able to convey.* In Mr. Letts's words, "they spread an atmosphere of piety and beauty around the lives of prince and people alike." At the end of the great period came the genius of Gerard David, to give permanent expression to the high and tranquil religious ideals that inspired the leaders of the Catholic Renaissance—the *devotio moderna*.

If Hubert and Jan van Eyck were primarily Court artists, Campin, Memlinc, and van der Weyden worked for the Guilds. To linger over the former, or, indeed, over other great Flemish figures like Hugo van der Goes and Dirk Bouts would be to fill the rest of these little pages with their praise. Memlinc and Gerard David will best serve our purpose, for in them we have two really municipal artists. If we lay in front of us Marc Geerhardt's plan of the city (1562), drawn from a height outside to the north, we shall see their houses in the Vlamiynck Dam, Memlinc's halfway up and David's at the corner, not far from the bridge that takes the road up to the Bourse and the House of the Florentine Merchants. Memlinc, a native of Mainz, came to the Netherlands somewhere about 1455. Guicciardini is probably right in saying that he worked under Roger van der Weyden, whom, in his later years, he echoes in his work; he lived at Bruges from 1468 until his death in 1494. If we follow the street northwards and then bear left, we shall come upon the Hospital of St. John just

* There should be no need to refer those interested in the Flemish painters to Sir Martin Conway's informing book, *The Van Eycks and their Followers* (1921).

above the former quarters of the Biscay Merchants, and find there some of his most characteristic work; the large triptych, the centre panel of which represents the Virgin between the two St. Johns, and, better still, the Floreins altar-piece, smaller and more beautifully finished, of the Baptist and St. Veronica; but it is to the shrine of St. Ursula that eyes and hearts naturally turn, to be rewarded with the lovely fairy-tales of an artist who is really a miniaturist on a large scale: a painter of exquisite detail, one who avoids the contrasts of light and shade and the grander methods of the Van Eycks, because he could not compass them.

After the death of Memlinc, David is the chief representative of the Bruges School. He came from Oudewater, near Gouda, being admitted in 1484 as a master-painter to the Bruges Guild. He is a religious painter of great sincerity. Sir Martin Conway has seized the essential in him when he writes: "One might imagine him at home with the Brethren of the Common Life or any of the mystic fellowships whose days of vitality were coming to an end when David was born. The atmosphere of his picture is like that of the *Imitation of Christ*. David was the only northern artist who ever painted a St. Francis at all acceptably." He was a conservative, reverencing the Van Eycks, from whom he drew his richness of colour and the simple and strong character of his work. The Museum of the Academy has his "Baptism of Christ." The finest example of his work is the "Madonna and Virgin Saints," which he painted for the Carmelite nuns of Sion in Bruges, now in the Museum of Rouen; but one should not forget his triptych of St. Michael at Vienna, if only for the exterior of the shutters. David was bolder and more powerful than Memlinc, for his nature was a deeper one: yet it is in the chapter-house of St. John's Hospital at Bruges that the fifteenth century in

Northern Europe best reveals its fascinating fusion of medieval and Renaissance methods.

It is not surprising that economic historians pay Antwerp and Lisbon more attention than even Florence, Venice, or Genoa. When the Zwyn silted up, Antwerp took the place of Bruges as the metropolis of northern trade. From Portugal, Spain, England, and Southern Germany it drew its main quota of merchants. In 1446 Englishmen had made their trade in cloth one of the chief branches of Antwerp's business; when the sea route to the East Indies was discovered, the agent of the King of Portugal introduced the spice trade, and the town began to have a permanent rather than a visiting clientèle, as had been the case in the time of the medieval fairs. Lisbon first collected the East Indian trade, whence it flowed to Antwerp, for the King of Portugal sold the cargoes to rich syndicates, who got a monopoly and took care that the whole trade should be concentrated there, so as to keep up prices. The English managed their cloth trade in a similar way, and South German fustian, now "produced in a wholesale capitalistic manner for export" (to quote Dr. Ehrenberg), together with Hungarian copper, for which Venice had been the chief market, were sent in large quantities to Antwerp. The place held large numbers of foreign merchants permanently settled in the country, who had a business connection with a whole group of their fellow-countrymen. "It is rather astonishing," writes the author just quoted, "to find in Antwerp in the early sixteenth century the quite modern type of English broker, both broker and commission agent, which has only begun to be usual in Germany in quite recent times." There was a similar absence of restriction. In Bruges the brokers had been a monopolist corporation, whereas in Antwerp they were free, and all the burghers of Antwerp could engage professionally in money-changing. "Clearing-house business

was carried on by book transactions without ready money." Unquestionably the business of trade was to a high degree speculative; the market had to be followed from hour to hour. The pepper trade will illustrate the point. This trade was a monopoly of the King of Portugal, who sold the cargoes of the East Indian fleets to syndicates. These groups often bought the cargoes while still at sea, made large advances to the King of Portugal, and repaid themselves by charging high prices. The amount of the cargoes was highly uncertain, the demand for them could never be fully foreseen, and in consequence the course of prices fluctuated considerably. Christopher Kurz, a Nuremberg merchant, whose letters (1543-1544) to the Tucher firm give us much information about the prevailing system, boasted that he had found an astrological system for foretelling the prices of pepper, ginger, and saffron. "Trade in spices," he remarks, "needs great foresight." But when we hear that he also prophesied that the Papacy would be extinct within sixty years' time, we may doubt whether contemporaries paid much heed to his prognostications. Still, they are symptomatic of a highly speculative age.

We have struck the note prominent in Guicciardini, who laid stress on the dangers as well as the strength of this type of trading. "Formerly," he writes, "the nobles, if they had ready money, were wont to invest it in real estate, which gave employment to many persons and provided the country with necessities. The merchants employed capital of this kind in their regular trade, whereby they adjusted want and superfluity between the various countries, gave employment to many, and increased the revenues of princes and states. Nowadays, on the other hand, apart from the nobles and the merchants (the former secretly through the agency of others, and the latter openly in order to avoid the trouble and risk of a regular profession)

employ all their available capital in dealing with money, the large and sure profits of which are a great bait. Hence the soil remains untilled, trade in commodities is neglected, there is often increase of prices, the poor are fleeced by the rich, and finally even the rich go bankrupt." The study of the Bourse in its early history is one of absorbing interest, for, besides the hard facts, it brings us into contact with a great variety of economic opinion. The tradition of the Canon Law was still upheld by critics of the new order, and the business of the Exchange was regarded with great suspicion by those who did not fully understand its workings, or who believed that man-power and a contented and prosperous agrarian class were more important than the potential fruits of speculation. Mr. Tawney, in his introduction to Thomas Wilson's *Discourse upon Usury*, has analysed these currents in a masterly fashion.

There is little need to say that the Fuggers had considerable interest in Antwerp. Dr. Ehrenberg has given a list of their outstanding claims there in 1546 (figures in Flemish pounds):

The City of Antwerp	...	21,746	13	0
Brussels Court	...	30,739	11	8
The King of Portugal	...	6,000	0	0
The King of England	...	83,900	0	0
Gaspar Ducci	...	44,000	0	0

Sums amounting to 186,386:4:8 Fl. Much of this they had to borrow from merchants at fairs; the money cost them on an average 8 to 10 per cent. per annum, while they got from 11 to 13 per cent. interest; 12 per cent. was roughly the rate of interest which the English Privy Council approved for loans, but sometimes a higher was given in order to secure preferential treatment as against, say, the Emperor. Such loans on the part of the borrowing powers were negotiated by national representatives.

The history of such men is an important one in the general development of the diplomatic envoy. They were, or had to be, "*huomini qualificatissimi*," as Guicciardini calls them. Henry VIII.'s political agents, such as Knight and Pace, whose missions had a more general character, frequently had much to do with loans; but the first financial agent proper of the Crown at Antwerp was Stephen Vaughan, a London merchant, followed by William Dansell, and then by the remarkable Sir Thomas Gresham, like Vaughan a merchant adventurer. His business was to raise loans in Antwerp for the English Government. In 1566 Gresham said that in the fourteen years past he had borrowed £1,840,000 for the King, and repaid it nearly all. The improvement which a man like this was able to effect in the credit of the country, by being punctual and personally honest, was considerable. From the commercial world at Antwerp Gresham got also news, which he passed back to his Government. The world bourse was of value diplomatically, and Gresham's presence in Antwerp explains the admirable news service about European affairs received by Elizabeth and her Ministers.

To explain the course of history by economic factors has its dangers; a purely economic interpretation is seldom exhaustive; but a great deal may be learned from applying this method to the problems of Renaissance Europe. Chief of these is the question why, from a general cultural point of view, Florence took the lead in the Renaissance movement. Venice and Genoa were rich and powerful, and the former developed a superb art of her own; yet both the initiative and the all-round supremacy lie with the city on the Arno. An interesting, though naturally incomplete, answer is provided by the reflection that the strength of the Venetians and the Genoese in the Middle Ages lay in industry and in their trade in commodities, while that of Florence lay primarily in banking.

This gave her citizens important connections in the Courts and high places of Europe, and, requiring little work from the individual, left them leisure for higher interests. This theory may perhaps minimize the activity of the *arti*; yet it should be noted that these Guilds were concerned in manufacturing, not the bare, necessary articles of life, but choice and rare goods, the "luxury articles" of the Middle Ages. The Florentines from an early time had a great capacity for culture, and the fact that while they had no port they could only play a powerful part in the world through money may have unconsciously stimulated their passion for artistic production on all sides.

Among the great banking families like the Portinari Sassetti, and Tornabuoni, the Medici took a leading part. Since the beginning of the fifteenth century they had been the chief bankers of the Roman Curia, a position which they retained until Lorenzo the Magnificent fell out with Pope Sixtus IV. This led to the Papal business being transferred to Francesco de' Pazzi and the intensifying of the enmity between the two families which ended in the Pazzi conspiracy and the overthrow of that family. Among the Florentines settled at Naples, the Strozzi family, originally exiled from Florence, had a powerful position, built up by business done with King Ferrante. The head of the clan, Filippo, was ultimately recalled to Florence, to vie with Lorenzo in the magnificence of his artistic patronage. Round Medici and Strozzi much of the story of Florentine art could be written. That this could be so lay in the nature of Florentine government. Florence was a city of political experiment. Within her the forms of social life and governmental organization possible in a city were being constantly put to the test. To her scientific mind it seemed that by constantly dividing and distributing political power she could create a lasting order of things. This con-

stitutional artistry, which has about it something of the experimentalizing of nineteenth-century France (if we except the Napoleonic tradition), was curiously abstract and methodical. In 1494, Savonarola, in his effort to set out a constitution, got the sixteen Companies of the city each to work out a plan, the four best to be selected by the *Gonfalonieri* and the Signoria to choose the winner. It was like an architectural competition, but in Florence architecture remained, constitutions perished. To Dante, Florence was the sick man never at rest for long in one position. From the rule of the nobility she had passed to the democratic control of the Guilds; then the large Guelf banking interests had captured her and ruled with explosions and interludes of industrial discontent and rioting until the supremacy of a single house seemed permanently established. Then had come the theocracy of Savonarola, then the reaction against the naïve clerical control of life and its pleasures, the return of the Medici, then a brilliant republican interlude, and finally submersion beneath Charles V. This mutability was reflected in the supple Florentine temperament. The Medici gauged it well and laid their plans accordingly. Cosimo and Lorenzo preserved the Signoria, but influenced it by securing the election of its members through committees on which their supporters predominated. They delighted the people with pageantry and triumphs—the shows depicted in the work of the Sienese Francesco di Giorgio—and contributed enormously to charity. Between 1434 and 1471 they paid in such contribution and for public buildings 633,755 florins. Stability they might have maintained had it not been for two disturbing factors: Florence had to maintain a hold over neighbouring towns that had formerly been her rivals and were now her subjects; and there was always the tendency to call in the outside invader. A fatal Guelf tradition looked to foreign intervention to solve the

internal difficulties of Florence, and it never seemed that this could be banished.

But no place, save ancient Athens, has taken so keen a delight in the amenities of life, none in joining art and commerce in such a synthesis of sustained beauty. A painter had a shop, not the studio of to-day. He was a craftsman working to a precise and carefully worded contract, a decorator, as we should call him, rather than a modern artist. He belonged to the Guild of the druggists (*speziali*), who ground his colours for him; and he had in his *bottega* or workshop a team of apprentices who were both "art students" and technical assistants. He was not confined to working in tempera or in oils, but had to be able to turn his hand to all sorts of sculpture and carving. Versatility was, above all else, demanded of him. His employer was not only the secular patron of the religious corporation, but on many occasions the municipality. Readers of Vasari will remember the great competition of 1400, when, after the plague was over, the Signoria and the Guild of the Merchants asked Italian sculptors for designs for the bronze doors of the Baptistery; how Lorenzo Ghiberti came back from the Romagna, where he had been "painting a chamber and other works" for Pandolfo Malatesti, to compete against Donatello and Brunelleschi, Jacopo della Quercia and others, roused by Bartoluccio, his father-in-law, who had told him that now was his opportunity, the chance "to derive such advantages that neither one nor the other of them need any longer work at pear-making" (*i.e.*, the making of ear-rings). When Ghiberti had finished his model, such was the public spirit of the greatest of his competitors that they persuaded the syndics to adjudge the work to him. "Happy spirits!" writes Vasari, "who, while aiding each other, took pleasure in commending the labours of their competitors." But these were the Periclean days of Florence. It is incontestable that

here during the centuries between Giotto and the Eclectics there is a higher level of public taste and æsthetic appreciation than in any other European city, and Mr. Roger Fry is justified when he maintains that the art of the period may be set against that of any other period in modern history. Little wonder, then, that the story of Florence found a line of historians which in so short a period it would be hard to match—Machiavelli, Valori, Guicciardini, Varchi, Vettori, all men writing with an earnest, practical purpose.

In Venice the atmosphere is totally different. We are in a city whose political experiments are in the past. Aristocratic stability is the mark of the Venetian Constitution, rich and splendid materialism of Venetian art. People knew how the place was governed and how it was likely to be governed, and they were too busy making money to bother seriously about internal change. Since 1296 (the closing of the Great Council) the people had been excluded from effective political power, and even earlier than this the Doge had been reduced to the position of an artistic figure-head. Yet there had been very little conspiracy. Foreign travel, resistance to the Turk, commercial competition distracted possible malcontents. Proudly self-conscious, at peace within, Venice traded with, yet stood aloof from, the rest of Europe. She had her consuls and ambassadors everywhere, she was admirably informed of what was going on, she sold her alliance at the highest price after calm reflection; but she was not as other cities were. She had never indulged in the political partisanship of the mainland. No one can stand in the loggia of St. Mark's during time of high tide when a south-east wind is blowing and watch the water rising through the marble pavements of the piazza without realizing that the strength of Venice lay in her keels. Her tragedy was that territorial ambition (as much as Christopher Columbus) came to undermine the sturdy devotion to the

ὅγρὰ κίλειθα; to lead her into the alliance (1499) with the French monarch, Louis XII., against Lodovico Sforza, so that the homesteads of Friuli were soon being burned by the Turk whom the Moor had summoned, or to bring against her in the end the unholy League of Cambray (1509), from which she emerged with honour, but not without lasting damage. It is not surprising to find, in this atmosphere of commerce and ambitious pursuit of power, the literary impulse wanting in Venice. It did not germinate till she had ceased to be politically in the front rank; but her external life, her public buildings, her palazzi, and her private architecture show a continuous progress in design and ornament from the fourteenth century to the days of Goldoni. Her taste never became gross. Waterways in a confined space do not conduce to architectural errors; in building there was always the example of the past and the needs of the quayside to be considered; and reflection is an inducement to good lines. "The sea," Euripides said, "washes away all the ills of men."

CHAPTER V

FLORENCE: GIOTTO TO LEONARDO

"THOU, O God, dost sell unto us all good things at the price of labour." To many the Renaissance appears as a time of unfettered and spontaneous production in all branches of art. In reality the triumphs were won at the cost of laborious research and untold energy.

"How admirable thy justice, O thou first mover! Thou hast not willed that any power should lack the processes or qualities necessary for its results." The writer has seen that nature is governed by law, discoverable to the scientific intellect: law that reflects in each living thing the rule of mind.

The optimism and humility expressed in these two extracts from Leonardo da Vinci's notebook are the secret of the Renaissance mind at its highest. It is set on discovering, before it can express; it rests content with no assumption; it believes in its own power, given the diligence and habit of study. The student of Renaissance art will measure its greatness precisely by this capacity to learn. He will prize the "unfinished" sketches and cartoons, the anatomical studies that are the groundwork of that scientific realism of structure, the softness of modelling and the perfect rightness of line which distinguish Florentine art at its best. He will not grumble because Leonardo (in Sabba da Castiglione's words) "when he ought to have attended to painting, in which without doubt he would have proved a new Apelles, gave himself entirely to geometry, architecture, and anatomy." It is worth hearing the master himself comment on his own anatomical drawings in the Windsor Manuscripts:

"In order to obtain an exact and complete knowledge of these, I have dissected more than ten human bodies, destroying all the various members and removing even the very smallest particles of the flesh which surrounded these veins without causing any effusion of blood other than the imperceptible bleeding of the capillary veins. And, as one single body did not suffice for so long a time, it was necessary to proceed by stages with so many bodies as would render my knowledge complete; and this I repeated twice over in order to discover the differences."* We need not think that his time with Marc Antonio della Torre was wasted.

The aim of true painting was to depict the body in co-ordination with the mind; or, in Leonardo's words again: "What should first be judged in seeing if a picture be good is whether the movements are appropriate to the mind of the figure that moves." Elsewhere, and differently, he defined the highest merits of painting "as creation of relief where there is none." The problem before the artist was, in the terse phrase of Professor Mather, how to give convincing mass to significant emotion. This quest dominated the history of Florentine art from the time when Giotto began painting down to the days of Michael Angelo. It ruled in sculpture and the smaller industrial arts likewise.

The first necessity was progress in projection: to break away from the flatness of the Byzantine manner, universally dominant in the thirteenth century, whether on wooden panel, in mosaic, or fresco. The majestic and authoritative figures of God in the apses, the silhouetted figures in the narrative style, admirable in colour, perfect set pieces of decoration, could not express the deepening of religious emotion to which the Mendicant movement had given rise or meet the re-

* Quoted in E. McCurdy, *The Mind of Leonardo da Vinci* (Cape, 1978).

quirements of the more resplendent and self-sufficient forms of thirteenth-century civic life. Some change commensurate with the age that produced Guinizelli, Cavalcanti, and Dante had to come, and from classical Rome it was to spring through the medium of Florence and her masters. While Siena was still bathed in her medieval style, softening and making more personal the Byzantine tradition, centring her religious devotion in the cult of the Virgin and the tenderness of the Mother and Child group, while Cimabue was impregnating existing Byzantine forms with a greater dramatic significance, Giotto di Bondone (1267-1337) was drawing on classical art and his own feeling for naturalism to give a new and decisive turn to the art of Florence.

The turning-point probably came with his visit to Rome. It was then, most justly, that recourse was being had to the resources of the classical age—sculptured columns, arches and sarcophagi, the pagan wall-paintings and the earliest Christian mosaics. The classical manner was first fully developed by Pietro Cavallini, who in 1291 had designed for Santa Maria in Trastevere a Madonna and four stories of the Christ Child in mosaic. The figures both here and in the Last Judgment fresco in Santa Cecilia in Trastevere show a departure from the Byzantine style through the use of light and shade and the Hellenistic appearance of the drapery. A similar use of *chiaroscuro* was made by the master who designed the stories of Isaac in the Upper Church at Assisi. Giotto, who had already painted some of the narrative pictures of St. Francis' life in the Upper Church, was called to Rome in 1300 to design the mosaic of Christ walking on the Sea of Galilee that stood over the inside cloister-portal of the former St. Peter's. The visit seems to have made him renounce the narrative style in favour of a manner akin to sculptured relief. As has been well said: "The arches and columns

of Imperial Rome are teaching their silent lesson. The simple and noble forms of Cavallini and his nameless rivals show how painting may vie with sculpture in sense of mass and reality." In the Arenga Chapel at Padua Giotto put forth his greatest representations of painting conceived sculpturally. The last stage in his development was to let sweetness and warmth have their play, to give greater humanity and charm to the classically severe. It is this manner which we can trace in the decorations of the Bardi Chapel in Santa Croce.

Assistants, pupils, and friends outside Giotto's *bottega* continued his tradition without the Giottesque simplicity and dramatic power; but the tendency was to carry on the narrative style in large surfaces till it became almost panoramic, or to do little panels of charmingly finished but intellectually meagre work. Great names in the succession are few; Orcagna (for his work in Santa Maria Novella) and Gherardo Starnina (for the legend of St. Nicholas in the Castellani Chapel of Santa Croce) stand out pre-eminently; but it is not until the days of Ghiberti, Brunelleschi, and Donatello (all round about 1400) that a new impulse is given to Florentine art, to make it diverge definitely from the Sienese, which under Duccio, Simone Martini, and the Lorenzettis had shown what capacities for growth lay in the medieval tradition, and in the hands of Sassetta and Giovanni di Paolo was to make gothic beauty achieve almost the height of genius. It was the work of sculptors and architects that gave the new impetus. At the end of the fourteenth century progress in sculptural art was by no means confined to Middle Italy. The naturalism of the later Rhenish and South German wood-carvers, the artists that worked on Gian Galeazzo Visconti's cathedral at Milan, the ivory and metal craftsmen of Burgundy, and, if a trifle later, the alabaster carvers of the English Midlands were directing expectations into new channels and preparing men's minds for a fresh incoming

of the classical spirit. In Rome, Paolo Romano's tomb of Cardinal Stefaneschi (Santa Maria in Trastevere) was symptomatic of a growing interest in portraiture. The new realism, however, when it came, arose not out of the strained expressiveness of the medieval, but was grounded in the study of the freer naturalism in classical art. It was not tinged with the archaism, the sarcophagus atmosphere of Giovanni Pisano, beautiful as his work was, but grew out of a more critical analysis of ancient forms in their relation to nature. Lorenzo Ghiberti, whom we have seen victorious in the competition for the doors of San Giovanni, betrays the scientific interest that guided Leonardo's whole life: "I have always sought for first principles, as to how nature works in herself, and how I may approach her, how the eye knows the varieties of things, how our visual power works, how visual images come about, and in what manner the theory of sculpture and painting should be framed." In this spirit worked his young compatriot Nanno di Banco, and, with the zeal of greater genius, Donatello and his friend Brunelleschi. These two, when defeated in the competition, went to Rome, just as Giotto had done, only more consciously and deliberately, to poke about among remains and to trace out neglected classical design. Donatello had the original genius, the gift of realism dependent on observation and moral judgment rather than on workshop tradition. A specialist in every plastic medium, he is the great figure of the early Renaissance, who gave the plastic arts their range and versatility. His early figures in marble show an individuality, surprising, vigorous, and nobly conceived; but it is in his treatment of relief found in his tabernacles, pulpits, and monuments, the result of his visit to Rome, that the full meaning of his break with the gothic forms of the past is manifest. The perspective that he puts into work like the dance of Salome (San Giovanni, Siena) or the miracles of St. Anthony

(in the High Altar, San Antonio, Padua) or the crucifix in the Bargello must have astounded contemporaries. This was the groundwork from which the painters could start once again, in discontent with the panoramic style, either deliberately to turn back, as Lorenzo Monaco did, to the Byzantism of Siena, or to move forward as Masolino (1384-1447) and the greater Masaccio (1401-1428) to a new realistic treatment.

The painting of Masaccio in the Brancacci Chapel of the Carmelite Church in Florence (the Carmine) was epoch-making, and made a profound impression for its use of a new *chiaroscuro* technique. Masaccio's innovation was the use of light and shade so as to give the best representation of mass and distance and the idea of aerial perspective. Distant objects, he saw, diminished in clarity of outline; as Dr. Mather puts it, "he (Masaccio) felt the air as a palpable veil between the object and the eye, and he painted not simply the object, but, as well, its veil." The Carmine frescoes, particularly that of the Tribute Money, are magnificent in their suggestive modulations of dark and light. The same style, but more majestic, is seen in his picture of the Trinity in Santa Maria Novella in Florence. The most interesting comment upon the new style is the way in which Fra Angelico da Fiesole (1387-1455), by studying the methods of Donatello and Masaccio and the architecture of Michelozzo, brought into the frescoes of the Dominican convent of San Marco a new beauty of religious art. The concision and tenderness of the mural painting in the cells, the depth and power of the mystical crucifixion in the chapter-house (the figures are set against a stormy sky of murky slate and orange) are a possession for ever.

Masaccio reached his goal intuitively, in a sudden flash that showed what could be done, while leaving it to others to work out the why and the how. The first generation that followed made the scientific study

of his technique, working, like Paolo Uccello (1397-1475) at the problem of perspective, or, like the great Andrea del Castagno, at anatomy, at the portrayal of strength and muscle, the hero who is also man. The second generation elaborated the experiments in colouring brought from the north by the brilliant Domenico Veneziano. Domenico finished the pictures which he had begun in tempera with an oil glaze. The older colouring could now be replaced by more subtle tones and shades, and the new method, by permitting over-painting and finer brushwork, opened the way for the greater artists that were to follow. Before long the colour possibilities of the new technique were realized. Charm of a new rarity came into Florentine art, one school being content to experiment no further, but to see what the narrative style under the new conditions could achieve. Fra Filippo Lippi, Benozzo Gozzoti, Ghirlandajo, and the Predella painters, especially Pesellino, are the painters of serenity, the colourful, untroubled Renaissance. Their madonnas rank with the reliefs of Desiderio da Settignano, Benedetto da Maiano, and Mino da Fiesole as contributions to the history of taste; and in prolongation of this joyous mood, the pure Renaissance forms of San Gallo, Leon Battista Alberti, and Luciano Laurana at Urbino ask no questions, but are simple statements of chaste proportion, with none of the restlessness and overloading of the next century. But another school was set on scientific research and ready for the challenge of problems. Antonio Pollaiuolo, the student of anatomy and human dynamics, had a powerful influence on all looking to the future; but the reaction against the sunny good temper and radiance of the followers of Fra Filippo can best be traced in the profoundly individual and disturbing beauty of Botticelli's masterpieces. Botticelli, the master of linear design, whose art is the mirror of the Platonism of Lorenzo's circle, has made an appeal to Eastern as

well as to Western critics. It is significant that his most able expositor is a Japanese. This may be because, as Mr. Berenson says in another context, "there has never . . . been an artist so indifferent to representation and so intent upon presentation." After his early phase, he set himself to communicate the idea; he is abstract, yet never wanting in the true artist's value of touch and movement, and what he cannot paint he suggests. The flowers blown about in his "Birth of Venus" radiate that picture with the life-giving force that thrills in the Lucretian address to the goddess:

"Omnibus incutiens blandum per pectora amorem
Efficis ut cupide generatim sæcla propagent."

There was never a man who so strongly refused the facile beauty of some of his contemporaries. He was the true contemporary "highbrow," and even if we are believers in representational art, we cannot regret his choice.

The artistic development of Florence communicated itself without. Donatello in earlier days had taught Mantegna at Padua; Fra Angelico stayed a year at Cortona; Benozzo Gozzoli and Domenico Veneziano worked in Perugia. But in the case of the greatest Northern Umbrian master, Piero della Francesca, the decisive influence came from Siena as well as from Florence. Sassetta lived for some time in Borgo San Sepolchro, Piero's native town, and evidently had a considerable effect on the younger man, while the other chief influence was Domenico Veneziano, whom, after 1439, Piero helped in the restoration of the frescoes in the choir of San Egidio in Florence. From Domenico he may have learned his colouring; but his wonderful monumental sense and power of chiaroscuro he must have developed as he studied Masaccio in the Carmine. The Arezzo frescoes (shortly after 1460) make this clear. Piero's mastery of aerial per-

spective comes out in the Urbino triumphal pictures already alluded to, as well as in his great "Resurrection" in the Palazzo Communale at Borgo. There is about his work something wholly individual, something austere, delicate, yet powerful, which comes out in the Madonna with Federigo of Montefeltro (Berlin) and in the central figure of the lovely Madonna, Child, and Angels (Christ Church). He had impressive pupils—Melozzo da Forlì (1438-1494), who worked for Pope Sixtus IV., and Luca Signorelli (1445-1523), the embodiment of power and erratic genius, whose finest work has something of the Michelangelesque.

Nowhere in Florence was such a training to be had as in the workshop of Verrocchio, with Pollaiuolo, the other great experimentalist of his time. The Boy with the Dolphin in the Palazzo Vecchio and the Colleone Statue show us what he was capable of in sculpture; in painting his innovation was in the treatment of landscape, where he forsook the method of intense clarity and definition for one of gentler and more opalescent light, a change in which he was followed by Leonardo. It was an all-round education that he must have given his assistants. One he had of more than ordinary distinction, one a man of the highest genius. If Lorenzo di Credi painted with Leonardo in his early days he was soon surpassed by him, as any man might, without dishonour, have been. The life of Leonardo da Vinci has been many times written and monographs on him abound. Perhaps Paul Valéry has been best enabled to grasp and portray that intense intellectual receptivity, that faculty for drawing from life, through the study of nature, some measure of its possibilities.* The man who fused all types of experience, who came near to conquering the discrepancy that most people feel between the transitory yet distracting incidents of personality, the bodily

* "Étude sur le méthode de Léonard da Vinci," in *Variété* (1924).

needs and passions on the one hand, and the life of the spirit on the other, "cet Apollon ravissant," as Valéry calls him, dominates the two centuries of his era. To few men is it given both to invent and to clothe the invention with the beauty of a perfect work of art, whether it be a ballista, a cannon-foundry, an armoured-car, or an aeroplane; but to fewer to understand thoroughly the interpretation of science and art, by perceiving that in art a prime necessity is to grasp the laws of motion and energy, the forces sustaining physical structure. The artist, he held, "has two chief objects to paint, man and the intention of his soul"; the latter has to be represented by the attitudes and movement of the limbs, and this explains his researches into naturalness of expression. To arrive at nature, the statement of the perfectly developed, we must study the process of becoming, the how and the why of growth, the secret of energy.

The main facts of his life are briefly told. He was born in 1452, the natural son of a man of astonishing virility, whose last child was born nearly fifty-two years after Leonardo. He began in Verrocchio's workshop, but did not win the favour of Lorenzo de Medici; he may not have been sufficiently interested in Platonic mysticism, for his mind was concrete and his outlook scientific and realist. The departure of Botticelli, Ghirlandajo, Perugino, and Cosimo Roselli to paint in the Sistine Chapel (1481) may have led him to look elsewhere for new fields. It was music that took him in 1483 to the Court of the Moor at Milan. Vasari says of him that "he gave some little study to music, but soon resolved to learn to play the lyre, and being by nature of a most lofty spirit and full of grace, he sang divinely to that instrument, improvising upon it." At Milan, where he did the famous "Last Supper," the musician-painter turned sculptor, engineer, town-planner, irrigation expert, and writer on the theory of flight. In 1499, when the French

ejected Sforza from Milan, he left, went first to Venice, where he advised the Council as to the best methods of defending the place against the Turk, and then to Florence, where he did the wonderful cartoon of the Madonna, St. Anne, and the Infant Christ for an altarpiece in the Annunziata. Then suddenly we find him for a few months in the Romagna, in the service of Cæsar Borgia, who was busy making those territories acknowledge his sovereignty. Here in 1502 he is described in the patent making him inspector-general of fortresses as "our most excellent and well-beloved servant, architect, and engineer-in-chief, Leonardo da Vinci." But it was perhaps this period that made him regard war as "pazzia bestialissima," and to determine to do nothing to further it—even himself, out of reverence for life, to become a vegetarian. In 1503 he returned to Florence, where he remained till 1506, his great works being the "Mona Lisa" and the cartoon for the picture of the Battle of Anghiari. From 1501 to 1513 he was at Milan—the time of his main anatomical studies. From 1513 to 1516 he worked in Rome, and his declining years he spent at the Château of Cloux, near Amboise, with which he had been rewarded by Francis I.

To regard, as Vasari did, Leonardo's excursions into science—such as his treatise *Sul vol degli uccelli*, or his studies on the flying machine—as a regrettable deviation from his main task of painting, is a natural but misleading point of view. His achievement in art was more complete than Vasari imagined, for all the unfinished work, for all the sketches that adumbrated bigger things. The study of primary causes made his contributions to the theory and practice of art the more real. In his treatise on painting, Leonardo speaks of the painter as perpetually having to amalgamate his mind with the mind of nature itself, and to interpret between nature and art. Each pose he paints represents the purposeful movement of individuals behaving

under the stress of individual emotion, not as symbols or as representative of unspecific beauties of grace or dignity. There is nothing statuesque or abstract in his figures, for all his love of allegory. Each is individually conceived and invested with the subtlety of its own atmosphere. He is an expert in what Mr. Berenson terms the "tactile values"—mentally we can touch his figures as we see them, can almost feel the air separating them from ourselves. His special contribution to painting was to turn men aside from the study of linear perspective to that of the proper distribution of light and shade. "It requires," he says, "much more observation and study to arrive at perfection in the shadowing of a picture than in merely drawing the lines of it." Thus the unfinished "Adoration of the Magi" was carried out in ground colours only, so as to enhance the light and shadow effects. The two versions of the "Madonna of the Rocks" (the earlier in the Louvre, the later in the National Gallery) show the process in continuous development. If these are compared with the small panel of the Annunciation (in the Louvre) the measure of the advance will be clear. Instead of being placed right and left, within an enclosed space, the figures are moved out to the centre, where they can get most freedom and light, leaving room for a background of depth and mystery. At the height of his art, in the "Mona Lisa," the background of nature blends in an extraordinary way with the central figure, and the soft gradations of colour tones are used to convey the pervading harmony of a single mood both in nature and the subject portrayed.

CHAPTER VI

THE GOLDEN AGE: VENICE

Two figures give the Golden Age of the Renaissance its characteristic expression, and one of them is almost its destroyer. Raphael and Michael Angelo both represent the culmination of different types of art, the Umbrian and the Florentine. With them the Grand Style has been attained. In it human figures, rather than historical narrative or panorama, predominate. They are mature, cast in "conventional" poses, one answering to the other; often they are contorted in violence, but the violence is always subordinated to the composition and compensated for by antithesis. Picturesque variegation of detail has departed, brilliant colour-pointing is no more; shades are fewer and richer, softer and more composed.

Into Raphael, the pupil of Perugino, were poured all the Umbrian grace of the half-medieval Gentile da Fabriano and the symmetry and simplicity of his own master's, Perugino's, power of composition, his light and air and sense of peace. But Raphael had more than this. From Leonardo da Vinci and Fra Bartolommeo he took a realistic draughtsmanship that separated him from his teachers. From 1500 to 1507 he was in the phase of charm and sweetness, curiously peaceful for a young man; then, hearkening to the call of experiment, he tried, at the age of twenty-five, in his picture of the Entombment in the Borghese Gallery at Rome, to rival the older and greater masters, with the result that his work became over-muscular. He had to return to the true Umbrian style, to draw once again upon the skill of Perugino and the sweetness of

Fra Angelico. His resolution to resist the Michel-angelesque must have called for much firmness when, in 1508, his friend Bramante, then the architect of St. Peter's, secured his appointment in Rome for the decoration of the *Stanze*, a task proposed for artists by Julius II. Michael Angelo was working at the time on the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, and the difference in method between the two masters was profound. From 1509 to 1511 Raphael did the frescoes in the Camera della Segnatura, portraying by allegorical figures the themes of religious authority, legal justice, secular philosophy and science, and the arts. The most interesting of the painting is the School of Athens. The scene is laid in a vaulted interior of great depth and magnificence. Groups of disciples surround Plato and Aristotle, while on the steps sprawls Diogenes. Aristotle, representing science, is vigorous and middle-aged; Plato, representing philosophy, is older and feebler. It was the age of science, for although Platonism had returned, philosophy took no great creative step forward until Descartes. The whole work in the Camera was finished when Raphael was only twenty-eight. Only nine years longer he lived, to become a decorator on a large scale in the Farnesina and the Vatican; but he could still return to the old manner and paint a work like the Sistine Madonna and the Transfiguration. Large-scale work, however, drew him, and the fact may not be recorded without regret. The tremendous fascination of Michael Angelo was before his eyes, and no one could fail to come under its spell.

The older artist, who will be for ever connected with the Sistine, the Mausoleum of Julius II., and the Sacristy of San Lorenzo, represents, not the spirit of scientific search that marks Leonardo, but the spirit of realization, the triumph of the humanist ideal. The values of touch and movement, the highest Florentine qualities in figure painting, are perfectly conveyed by

him through the nude. He goes to man himself, but man without the draperies that limit the perfect rendering of movement. Earlier in this essay we defined humanism as the projection of human functions into the concrete, whether in art or in literature and scholarship. Michael Angelo puts aside every veil between us and the body, whose qualities—beauty and dignity and power or their opposites—it is the aim of humanist art to reveal, and paints or models the most significant object there is. Here lies his strength; and when, as in the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel, he could through these means convey an ideal of beauty and force, “a vision of a glorious but possible humanity,” nothing has ever been like it since the days of Pheidias, nor, perhaps, can be again. But, as his sonnets show, his life was full of internal misery, the sense of misunderstanding, and the fretting of a Titanic spirit against the smallness of outlook that surrounded him. The scorn and bitterness which he felt passed into his figures. They made a great subject like his “Last Judgment” almost distorted, since it was impossible for him to render the gentler of the Christian virtues. The enormous energy and life here or the profound reverie of the San Lorenzo figures reflect another scale of values. The “Night” and “Day,” the “Twilight” and the “Dawn” are the speculations of a mature, sceptical mind that has passed from the joy of the Renaissance into the self-questioning and uncertainty of a later and greyer age. He was of his time, yet not of it. Wöfflin has shown how his design leads into the baroque; we might almost call its first beginnings the tragedy of his personal restlessness. But it is best to turn from his architecture to the drawings, and to ask whether, whatever be the result, such unadulterated energy has ever been infused into draughtsmanship or the body ever so magically utilized in design.

There are many who will turn from the intellectuals

of Florence to the less perturbed and mellower style of the city on the lagoons. The art of Venice developed late; and when it came it was crowded into scarcely more than a hundred years, roughly between 1475 and 1577. It is a rich art, full of colour and material splendour, as might be expected in a city full of costly marbles, enamels, and bronze brought—since building material was scarce—from overseas. The conquest of (1204), and proximity to, Constantinople meant that the Byzantine tradition was long preserved. Venice down to the fifteenth century imported no artists from outside, but borrowed Eastern methods for her local production.

The building of the great gothic churches of the Frari and SS. Giovanni e Paolo may have started the progress of the plastic arts, in which the brothers Massegne were prominent in the fourteenth century. In the first decade of the fifteenth the importation of sculptors and architects began. Piero di Niccolo, a pupil of Donatello, worked on the tomb of the Doge Tommaso Mocenigo in SS. Giovanni e Paolo, and Antonio Rizo of Verona came to help with the palace of the Doges. But the greatest of the architects and sculptors were the Lombardi family, Pietro and his two sons, Tullio and Antonio. Pietro's first work in the Veneto was the tomb of Roseli in Padua, finished in 1467. In Venice itself he did the tomb of Pietro Mocenigo (SS. Giovanni e Paolo), while his sons were entrusted with the memorial to Andrea Vendramin. Pietro's most perfect achievement is the little church of Santa Maria de' Miracoli, in a small island area; here he uses coloured marbles, dark greens and reds to emphasize the lines of the beautiful façade. The front is better even than that of San Zaccaria, and its interior with the raised choir definitely superior.

Venetian painting was first delivered from the Byzantine rut by Gentile da Fabriano and Pisanello

(1397-1455). Jacopo Bellini was a pupil of the former, and the founder of a great school of painting. He gave Venetian art intellectual force joined with a refined sweetness of treatment that had great influence on the future. He moved to Padua, where his daughter married Andrea Mantegna. The match brought his two sons, Gentile and Giovanni, into contact with the pupil of Squarcione, a great preceptor of classical art, perhaps the author of the "fruit-motive" that we find in the younger Paduan. The discipline must have been valuable, but the two Bellinis never caught the uncompromising austerity of their master. Mantegna could never have conceived the landscape in Giovanni Bellini's "Christ at Gethsemane."

Giovanni, Carlo Crivelli and Carpaccio brought the art of Venice to its first apogee. Crivelli with his quaint and appealing individualism may have shown the way; but he never came near the warmth and humanity of Giovanni Bellini, who in his madonnas gives us the Venetian type of beauty, but has banished Venetian materialism and hard splendour with a new gravity and seriousness. As he went on he approached more to Giorgione. Pictures like the "Allegory of the Souls in Paradise" (Uffizi) and the "Feast of the Gods" (Widener Collection) differ profoundly from the half-length madonnas of his earlier days. Of the narrative style, Carpaccio was the chief representative. Like Gentile Bellini, he was a panoramist, but a more imaginative one. In his decoration of the School of St. Ursula (1492-1498) he is the best story-teller conceivable. The dream of the saint can never be forgotten. But he could do the bigger monumental work also. In the "Presentation in the Temple" (Accademia) and the portrait of the "Two Courtesans on a Balcony" he has found a new method, and the wonderful canvas (1520) of the "Desert Hermits meditating on the Passion" (New York) shows that he was a mystic too.

The Grand Style came with Giorgione of Castelfranco and Titian. Giorgione is a master of shadow, which he invests with a warmth and colour that Leonardo never achieved. He is not a linear artist, but deals in effects of mass. He began with pastoral idylls and passed on to larger and more thoughtful allegorical work, still in the Arcadian setting. In craftsmanship and in the inspiration that lay behind it there had been nothing similar before him. His design is unsurpassed, the rhythms perfectly controlled. In content it is the painting of reverie executed by a contemplative. There are no passions in it but remembered ones. The figures are at peace, as befits the idyllic mood, yet they do not fail to impress the beholder with a sense of philosophic power. The "Judith" (Leningrad) and the "Shepherd Boy" (Hampton Court) are studies of creatures in search for reality. The "Three Philosophers" (Vienna) look into the shadow for the finality they can never reach. Such a mood Titian of Cadore, even in his early "Sacred and Profane Love," for all his early admiration and imitation of Giorgione, could never reach. It was not his line, yet while Giorgione was alive he could not help being fascinated by the philosophical allegory. It was rather like having Michael Angelo—only a different Michael Angelo—working in proximity.

Titian had to come out of the Giorgionesque shadow to discover new rhythms and new colour. This is what happened in the years following 1515. The "Assumption" and the "Pesaro Madonna" are signs of the new animation. And in 1520 the "Bacchus and Ariadne," painted for Alphonso d'Este's Alabaster Chamber at Ferrara, shows, in its enormous infusion of life and inspiration, that the painter had passed from the quietude of his early apprenticeship into the dynamic of his mature first style. We say first, since, with recognition and honour, the objectivity of treatment in his works increased.

In 1533 he was knighted by Charles V., and his employment by the Emperor and his son Philip led to the magnificent portraiture that is the only real challenge to Velasquez. But a further phase was to come. While Palma Vecchio was painting his lovely surfaces, and Moretto of Brescia, who seems the child of the seventeenth century, was finding freer compositional forms, and Coreggio, for all his wonderful drawing, beginning to sentimentalize over legs and arms, Titian had begun a new life. In 1545, now over seventy years old, he went to Rome, and there entered upon the impressionism that is so astonishing a development at so ripe an age. The nudes and the mythologies of his later years are tone poems in subdued colour. "He had begun," says Dr. Mather, "with the cool precision of Giovanni Bellini and closed with a passionate mystery of expression which foretells Rembrandt." The contrast with Michael Angelo is interesting. Titian never ended in virtuosity; his mind was quiet, receptive, and patient of experience. He lived to nearly a hundred.

To pass from him to Tintoretto and Paolo Veronese is to reach the late Venetian School. The transition may be made without a sense of disappointment. Tintoretto's aim, as he himself put it, was to achieve "the drawing of Michael Angelo and the colouring of Titian." His work is that of an illustrator on a gigantic scale, a mural artist decorating large surfaces. He has a vast imagination, best surveyed in the School of St. Roch and in the Ducal Palace. He painted far too much, but his best work is marked by a crispness and power of expression that is never loose. The Calvary in San Cassiano is his finest religious picture, the mythologies of the ante-collegio in the Ducal Palace his best poetry. Less great as an artist, but equally great as a technician, with a superb sense of colour, Paolo Caliari, called Veronese, vied with Tintoretto in mural decoration. He revels in archi-

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ture, in depth of perspective. He gives us the picture of the feasts and pageants of Venice. His mind is materialist, he is a citizen of a wealthy Renaissance state, and cares most of all for its splendours and amenities. No one since Gentile Bellini and Carpaccio had given such a picture of that existence, in its most luxurious phase. But where now are the problems of Leonardo? The lined face of the Florentine's self-portrait will reproach us if we contemplate the festivities too long.

CHAPTER VII

THE HUMANISM OF THE NORTH

THERE is some truth in the saying that humanism north of the Alps has a strongly religious flavour. The statement applies more to England, the Netherlands, and Germany than to France, where the Court of Francis I. and his successors displayed a brilliant secularism wholly in keeping with the best Italian tradition. Nowhere, perhaps, so keenly as in the Pleiad can we find a group of men setting themselves to apply the lessons of the classics to strengthen the poor *plante et vergette*, as they termed their own beautiful language. To make it, as Joachim du Bellay saw it already, *parfait en toute élégance et venuste de paroles*, the efforts of Ronsard and his friends were bent. In Rabelais the gaiety of Aretino was broadened into the laughter of a giant; and in Montaigne the scepticism which in Boccaccio had run into delicate farce took on a grave and experienced seriousness that brings mundane prudence to its climax. It was a time of great country-houses, not the delicate little Italianate manor of England which kept its English eaves and its English hall, but of the vast and rich piles built by Bullant and Lescot, adorned within by the portraits of the Clouets and the faience of Bernard Palissy. This elegant and graceful life, without the deeper religious questionings of the years after Calvin, without *Weltschmerz* or regret, is the freshest echo of the true Renaissance. But it is more an echo than the original note. Only Rabelais and Ronsard had the real thing in them, the creative mind that could educate an epoch.

In the Teutonic countries fifteenth-century humanism is a complex phenomenon, the blending of the new and the old in a synthesis which it is extremely difficult to label either medieval or modern. As a matter of fact, these categories are highly misleading. How are we going to classify the artist who painted the miniatures in the Psalter of John, Duke of Bedford? It is full of remarkable portraiture, its decoration is in many places Italianate, and yet it has an idiom of its own. Even so well known a figure as Sir Thomas More may cause some difficulty. He knows his classics, but is full of the clerical and scholastic past. He has been brought up in the household of the medieval Archbishop Warham; a good orthodox man. A recent historian has given his opinion that the Middle Ages are not "over" in England until the fall of Cardinal Wolsey, and that is late enough in all conscience. And how (to come abroad again) is a sculptor like Claus Sluter at Dijon to be classified? The fact is, I think, that in dealing with the epoch of the early Renaissance in the North, we must be prepared to sacrifice our usual "periods," engraven upon us through textbooks and the examination system, and seek for the continuity of the old and the new, their blending in a fusion of culture which can only be described as "fifteenth century." The issue is perfectly clear later. When we come to the time of Dürer and Cranach in Germany, or of Skelton and Wyatt in this country, we can speak of classical influences in design or of Italian influences in metre with some certainty. Till then we are in the delightfully perplexing borderland, the country of "prejudice and promise," to borrow Mr. Kingsford's excellent phrase.

This is certainly the phenomenon that meets us in German art. The South German wood-carvers round about 1500 have a knowledge of anatomy, they have seen the classical forms and know how to handle

them; yet they will not forsake their native idiom. Tilman Riemenschneider is full of admirable realism. His figure of St. Elizabeth in the Germanic National Museum at Nuremberg or his St. Barbara from the Bavarian National Museum at Munich are both portraits, the latter of exquisite grace and poise; yet in the group "God the Father with the Corpse of Christ" in the Kaiser Frederick Museum at Berlin the earlier conventions are followed, and the proportions of the standing figure are exaggerated so as to denaturalise the whole effect. The wonderful figure of Mary Magdalene by Hans Leinberger (Munich) has a power and realism equal to Riemenschneider's best; yet the attitude of the figure and the treatment of the arms are from the Bavarian past. Late German wood-carving is more of a gothic baroque than a vehicle of scientific naturalism. The most instructive fusion, however, of classical and traditional work is seen in the winged altars and sculpture of Michael Pacher, the Tyrolese. He had studied the methods of Mantegna and was clearly influenced by Donatello; his figures are often statuesque, the setting like that of Mantegna, and yet he can never get away from his native imagination, which runs riot in gothic decoration. The student has to wait long till the Italian is uppermost in Germany, and then it is importation rather than native adaptation.

It is clear that the inspiration behind a great deal of the religious painting of fifteenth-century Germany is the pietistic movement in the Netherlands. If Memlinc and David show themselves affected by it, still more do early German masters like the *Meister des Marienslebens*; it may have retarded the development of German art as a whole, and yet striking individuals earlier in the period could have shown the way. The Swiss, Konrad Witz, whose Annunciation is at Nuremberg, had almost discovered, on his own, the technique of Masaccio; and after him

there seems to be an arresting of German art, caused perhaps by the popularity of Wohlgemut. The answer to the problem of the uneven development of the art of the fifteenth century is perhaps in the political divisions of the country, in the localization of talent, the largeness of areas to be fertilized, and the strong persistence of the old type of *Herrgottschnitzler*. Not till Dürer, Grünewald, and Hans Baldung Grien appear can we be assured of the continuous breath of the classical impulse or realize that the study of the nude as the humanist studied it was having its due and full effect. And even if we study the nudes of that superb painter Lucas Cranach, we shall ask ourselves the question whether anatomy has really conquered the tradition of the North.

Yet that tradition is very lovely. The taste for Dürer is one that comes slowly, yet never fails to delight and surprise. We think of him as a linear draughtsman, a master of the delicate and expressive point, and then come upon the water-colour work—the picture of the little town of Kalkreut preserved in the Kunsthalle at Bremen or some of the best British Museum examples. Absorption in his woodcuts or his softer and filmier effects on copper will scarcely prepare us for the rich chiaroscuro of his "Apostles" in the Alte Pinakothek, or the boldness of the Adam and Eve in the Prado. Like Cranach he is an artist of incredible resources, not so stark and dramatic as Grünewald, whose Isenheimer Altar at Kolmar is one of the great things of the world, but more polished and self-conscious. If Riemenschneider could have had the graphic gift we might have had another Dürer.

Wood is the great German medium. The woodcut and the wooden figure have a continuous history from the Middle Ages onward, and the tradition of its working was handed down in the villages rather than being isolated in the individual *bottega*. This art is nearer the people, further from the *cognoscenti*. The

fact makes it harder to impregnate with new influences, for it is more stolid and resisting. Michael Angelo, watching his blocks being hewed out in the quarries at Carrara, would have been impossible in the country of the forest. There was no Rome to command the services of artists and to instruct by its trophies of classical times; and the tradition was one of *groups*, not of individuals. The South German master who worked in relief or made complete figures, specialized in the cluster of persons, in Last Supper or Calvary groups, rather than in single-figure portraiture. The reliefs in the choir screen at Naumburg are symptomatic of the direction of much German sculpture.

If the tradition in art was towards religious representation, in scholarship the serious practical bent was the same. Erasmus, Melancthon, and Reuchlin did not only write to purify Latin or for decorative purposes. The *Adagia* of Erasmus certainly held up the idea of elegance, and nothing that he penned lacked salt; but the full measure of the man can be seen in the *Colloquies*, in which, under the badinage and playfulness, a deep moral purpose lay. The dialogue between Cannius and Polyphemus is a censure on the false application of religion; the conversation between Antony and Adolph, probably Dutch friends of the writer, on what the sailors did when their boat was being shipwrecked, is a satire of the most delicate kind. One by one the author took the current abuses in religion and held them up to ridicule. And it is characteristic of the author that he never bowed down to mere style. He not only declared that he would prefer Christ to ten Ciceros, but said that even if he were able to achieve Cicero's style, he would yet prefer one that was more concise, more nervous, less finished, and more masculine. That was like the robust Valla, who preferred Quintilian.

It was not untypical that England should have

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taken Erasmus to its heart. A Dominican scholar has given his opinion that England was the one country of Christendom in which the Renaissance had never been pagan. There is much truth in the verdict, however much or little one may like to believe it. The tradition of men like Colet and More, the scholarly and beloved educators, was powerful throughout the sixteenth century. Seneca might have its way with the drama, and the classics be taught more fully in the schools, the *baldacchino* overarch the tomb of the sleeping knight and his lady, and box hedges surround in formal fashion the stocks in the manor garden; men might collect the sculpture of a hundred workshops from the South, and plant it at the end of walks and pleasaunces: but Samuel Fell could build his staircase at Christ Church in the true gothic manner in the seventeenth century, and Thomas Tallis and Orlando Gibbons use the majestic liturgy of the Latin Church as the groundwork of their own wonderful art. On the other hand, there was the new, the Renaissance, idea of kingship; there was paternal government in very truth; and there was the splendid instrument of a language enriched by the classical vocabulary and flexible in the mouths of Shakespeare and Marlowe and Ben Jonson. England, therefore, both received and kept; but she kept to transmute, so that Chaucer is the precursor of Spenser, and the religious verse-writers of the fifteenth century lived again in the greater complications of the age that produced Crashaw and Donne.

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